

## QUESTIONS ON AUTHORS IN C19 BRITISH VICTORIAN LITERATURE

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**\*2023 Note: This document's contents are over a decade old, so some links may no longer function, and page numbers need updating to the latest edition/s.**

This document includes versions of my study questions from the following survey courses and upper-division seminars:

English 212 British Literature since 1760 surveys: Eight courses (2008-2002).

English 335 British Victorian Literature: Two courses (Spring 2008 and 2003).

WR 139 British Victorian emphasis: Six courses (1999-95).

Includes some colonial and post-colonial literature from the period.

**To search for a specific author:** Use MS Word's Edit Menu "Find" feature—since author headings follow the pattern "Author Questions," just type the author's last name, a space, and the letter q. Titles, pages, and editions are included along with the questions, but for the majority of texts, I have used Greenblatt, Stephen, et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) ISBN 13: 978-0-393-92834-1.

## AUTHORS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

**Arnold, Matthew.** "Dover Beach," various poems, "Preface" to 1853 *Poems*, "Function of Criticism..." from *Culture and Anarchy*, "Literature and Science."

**Boucicault, Dion.** *London Assurance*.

**Browning, Robert.** "Caliban upon Setebos," various poems.

**Bulwer-Lytton, Edward.** *Money*.

**Carlyle, Thomas.** From *Portraits*, "Signs of the Times," from *On Heroes...*, from *Sartor Resartus*, from *The French Revolution*, from *Past and Present*.

**Carroll, Lewis.** "Jabberwocky," "The Walrus and the Carpenter."

**Darwin, Charles.** "Tierra del Fuego" from *Voyage of the Beagle*, "Struggle for Existence" from *Origin of Species*, selections from *The Descent of Man*.

**Dickens, Charles.** *Hard Times*.

**Doyle, Arthur Conan.** "The Final Problem" from *Collected Stories*.

**Eliot, George.** "Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft."

**Fitzgerald, Edward.** "The Rubáiyát of Omar Kayyám."

**Froude, James.** From *The English in the West Indies; or, The Bow of Ulysses*.

**Gandhi, Mohandas.** "Satyagraha" from *Non-Violent Resistance*.

**Gaskell, Elizabeth.** *Cranford*.

**Haggard, H. Ryder.** *King Solomon's Mines*.

**Hopkins, Gerard M.** "God's Grandeur," "Pied Beauty," various poems.

**Huxley, Thomas H.** "Prolegomena" from *Evolution and Ethics*, "The Physical Basis of Life."

**Kipling, Rudyard.** From *War Poems and Stories*.

**Lear, Edward.** "The Jumblies," "Cold are the Crabs."

**Livingstone, David.** From *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*.

**Lombroso, Cesare.** "Physical Anomalies of the Born Criminal," from *Criminal Man*.

**Mayhew, Henry.** From *London Labour and the London Poor*.

**Mill, John Stuart.** From *Autobiography*, from *On Liberty*, from *On the Subjection of Women*, from *Utilitarianism*.

**Morris, William.** "The Defence of Guenevere," "How I Became a Socialist," "The Haystack in the Floods," "Art and Socialism."

**Newman, John Henry.** From *The Idea of a University*, from *Apologia*, from *Liberalism*.

**Nordau, Max.** "Fin de Siècle" from *Degeneration*.

**Pater, Walter.** "Preface," "La Gioconda" and "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance*, "Style" from *Appreciations*.

**Patmore, Coventry.** From *The Angel in the House*.

**Rossetti, Christina.** "Goblin Market," "In an Artist's Studio," various poems.

**Rossetti, D. G.** "The Blessed Damozel," "The Woodspurge," from *The House of Life*.

**Ruskin, John.** From *Modern Painters*, "The Nature of Gothic" from *Stones of Venice*, "The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century," from *Unto this Last*.

**Shaw, George Bernard.** *Pygmalion*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*.

**Showalter, Elaine (ed.)** From *Daughters of Decadence: Women Writers of the Fin de Siècle*.

**Spencer, Herbert.** From *First Principles*.

**Stevenson, Robert L.** *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

**Swinburne, A. C.** "Hymn to Proserpine," "Ave atque Vale."

**Tennyson, Alfred.** From *In Memoriam A.H.H.*, various poems.

**Thomas, J. J.** "Introduction" to *Fraudacity*.

**Wilde, Oscar.** *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Salome*, "The Critic as Artist," "The Decay of Lying," *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

## MATTHEW ARNOLD QUESTIONS

Assigned: "The Buried Life" (1356-58), "Dover Beach" (1368-69), "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" (1369-74), "Preface to *Poems*" (1374-84); "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (1384-97); "Sweetness and Light," "Doing as One Likes," and "Porro Unum est Necessarium" from *Culture and Anarchy* (1398-1404); "Literature and Science" (1415-27).

### "The Buried Life" (1356-58)

1. How can this poem be compared to Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality"? What is the speaker searching for that might compare to the object sought in "Intimations"?
2. What is the "buried life"? Is it ever accessible, either in part or in full? What obstacles hinder us when we try to gain access to it?

3. What accusation does the speaker make against language? What is the relationship between language and emotional expression? What, if anything, does the speaker's treatment of language suggest about Arnold's view of poetry's therapeutic value?

4. What solution does the poem offer for alleviating the individual's isolation and inability to render the world morally intelligible? Do you find that solution convincing? Why or why not?

#### **"Dover Beach" (1368-69)**

5. Describe "Dover Beach" as a Greater Romantic Lyric—characterize the three stages as they occur specifically in Arnold's poem. Do you find the affective resolution convincing? Why or why not? (Note: Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" is a good example of the type of lyric referenced: such poems follow a meditative scheme: a) description of a natural scene, b) analysis of the spiritual problem the scene brings to mind, and c) emotion-based resolution of the problem.)

6. Explore Arnold's treatment of religion: What is the "Sea of Faith"? How does the phrase "bright girdle furled" involve Carlyle's metaphor of clothes? What "social prophecy" does Arnold make about the consequences of Europe's loss of Christian faith?

7. How does the speaker's lament that "the world... / Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light, / Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain" amount to a rejection of Wordsworth's "religion of nature"?

8. At what point does Arnold's mimetic description of nature turn into an investigation of emotional and spiritual matters? Why does he enlist the classical Greek tragedian Sophocles—not the Romantic Wordsworth—as his authority for doing so? How does Arnold reject Wordsworthian individualism?

#### **"Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" (1369-74)**

9. To what extent does this poem follow the pattern of a Greater Romantic Lyric? If it doesn't follow out all three stages, what stage does it partly or entirely lack? (Note: Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" is a good example of the type of lyric referenced: such poems follow a meditative scheme: a) description of a natural scene, b) analysis of the spiritual problem the scene brings to mind, and c) emotion-based resolution of the problem.)

10. What does Arnold's speaker go to the Grande Chartreuse to find or recover? What problem does the poem articulate? Is the problem solely a matter of the speaker having lost religious faith, or something in addition to that?

11. Matthew Arnold's speaker describes himself as "Wandering between two worlds, one dead, / The other powerless to be born" (85-86). What might Carlyle offer as the antidote to this feeling of paralysis? What attitudes does this poem's speaker share with Carlyle? Still, why wouldn't a Carlyle-type solution be acceptable to Arnold?

#### **"Preface to 1853 Poems" (1374-84)**

12. What two standards must be met for a poetic representation to be considered “interesting” or worthwhile (1505)? When is a representation not interesting?
13. What are the “external objects of poetry”? How does a poet recognize an “excellent action” (1506)?
14. What, according to Arnold, is the “radical difference” between the poetical theory of the Greeks and the poetical theory of the modern age? (1507) Why is poetry based on Aristotelian poetic theory superior to modern poetry even in the subordinate area of rendering thought and character?
15. What is the false aim for poetry that the “modern critic,” according to Arnold, “absolutely prescribes” (1509)? In explaining why he disagrees with modern critics, how does Arnold reject romantic self-consciousness and romantic poetics, at least insofar as he might describe them?
16. A “young writer having recourse to Shakespeare as his model” runs what “great risk” (1509-10)? Why exactly, according to Arnold, is Shakespeare the great poet he is, and why is he nonetheless not a good model of excellence for young Victorian writers?
17. What moral and intellectual effects does the study of the ancient writers have upon “those who constantly practice it” (1512)? Why are those effects important both to individual students/writers and the societies within which they live?
18. General question: What threat, implied or directly stated, has Arnold written his “Preface” to counteract? In other words, what is driving him to promote Classical poetics and the values he attaches to those poetics?

**“The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” (1384-97)**

19. What is the nature of the “critical effort” (1384), and what, according to Arnold, is the “highest function of man” (1385)? How do we know this to be so? Can criticism fulfill this highest function, or is it the case that only art can do so?
20. On 1386, what are the elements with which literary genius works? What precisely is the “grand work” of literary genius? What is it not? To what extent is literary genius therefore dependent upon the age in which it works?
21. On 1386, what is the relationship between the “critical power” and the “creative power”? Why can’t there be a truly great period of literary creation without criticism? What, for instance, was the problem with the romantics’ exercise of their creative genius?
22. How does Arnold analyze the French Revolution from pages 1387-88? What was the Revolution’s greatest strength, and what was its “greatest error”? How does this analysis of the Revolution relate to Arnold’s claims about “the function of criticism at the present time”?

23. How is Edmund Burke's career, which Arnold refers to from 1389-90, an example of "living by ideas" and therefore a counterbalance to the errors of the French Revolutionaries? How does Arnold explain his phrase "living by ideas" (1390)?
24. What notion "hardly enters into an Englishman's thoughts" (1391)? How is this missing notion essential to criticism? How does Arnold define criticism and its goals on 1391-92? For example, what one word sums up the rule criticism ought to follow?
25. What forces in current British life, according to Arnold, are getting in the way of intellectual progress? (1593-95)? What is his complaint about the newspaper headline "Wragg is in custody" (1394)?
26. What objections does Arnold anticipate from 1395 onwards against his view of British society's need for critical activity? What social vision is he offering—who or what will be the agent of change, and when will that change come about? How does Arnold finally define criticism?
27. General question: how does Arnold compare to John Stuart Mill in the objects of his criticism? In what does he differ from Mill?
28. Towards the end of "The Function of Criticism," Arnold describes his notions of the modern nation and the individual's place within it. How might those notions, for those who have read T. S. Eliot's claims about poetry and criticism in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," be a source for the later author's ideas?
- "Sweetness and Light," "Doing as One Likes," and "Porro Unum est Necessarium" from *Culture and Anarchy* (1398-1404)**
29. From 1398-1402, what does Arnold apparently mean by "Sweetness and Light"? And what does he have against Britain's boastings about "doing as one likes"—what isn't that kind of liberty a sufficient justification of the social and political *status quo*?
30. On 1402-04, how does Arnold characterize "Hellenism," and what advantages does he ascribe to it as a counterbalance against Puritanical "Hebraism"?
31. Compare and contrast Arnold's description of and prescription for Britain's social ills with those of Carlyle in *Past and Present*. In your response, make use of Arnold's key concepts: sweetness and light; disinterestedness; culture; the best self; reason; the State.
- From *Literature and Science* (1415-27)**
32. On 1416-17, after aligning himself with Plato's "view of education and studies," what does Arnold say is Thomas Henry Huxley's definition of literature? Why does Huxley, according to Arnold, believe that literature so defined is inadequate for a modern industrial society?

33. On 1417-21, how does Arnold, in turn, characterize science and its proper sphere of influence? To what extent does he pay tribute to, or at least acknowledge, the era's emphasis on the scientific method and to the empire of "facts"?

34. On 1420-23, what "powers" (1420), according to Arnold, constitute human nature, and what instinct drives people when they come by a particular fact or instance of "knowledge"? Why does literature, in Arnold's view, satisfy this instinct or need more effectively than science can?

35. Why is the line from Book 24 of the *Iliad*, "for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men" (1424) significant to Arnold? What truth does it drive home for him on 1424-25 about the value of literary studies to the ordinary person confronted with modern knowledge and technology?

36. As Arnold moves towards his conclusion from 1426-27, what does he say to those who might go along with the study of modern literary works, but only if the ancient languages are left behind? Why, according to Arnold, do modern people still need to study the Greeks and Romans and their languages? How does his quotation of Leonardo da Vinci's phrase, "The antique symmetry was the one thing wanting to me" (1426, *Defuit una mihi symmetria prisca*) help him make his case?

37. On 1425, Arnold relates with dismay how a typical English youth, when asked to translate Macbeth's poignant question, "Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased?" rendered it "Can you not wait upon the lunatic?" (Macbeth's words surely indicate more than a pedestrian impatience with the doctor's bedside manner.) Is Arnold just being a snob here in insisting on something like what a modern literary theorist would call "cultural literacy," or do you agree that his distress is justified? Is it more important to be alive to the beauties and depths of one's native language and literature or to know many facts about the natural world, such as "the moon's diameter" (1425)?

38. A general question: Arnold was an inspector of schools in Victorian times, so if he were around today, he might take considerable interest in our 21<sup>st</sup>-century public school system. How do you think he might respond to the charge that literature today cannot achieve the humanizing, steadying effect he hopes for because it's now taught in almost the same spirit as the hard sciences tend to be taught? Additionally, what do you think he might say if we told him that literary critics and theorizers have long adopted a stance of scientific rigor and embraced a "division of labor" into various narrow fields of inquiry? In other words, do the modern conditions under which literary studies are pursued strip them of their supposed humanistic value, or do you think that's overstating the case to the point of Eeyorish pessimism? Explain your own view.

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

## DION BOUCICAULT QUESTIONS

Assigned: Dion Boucicault. *London Assurance*. (Stierstorfer 77-143).

*London Assurance*

**Act 1**

1. Describe Sir Harcourt Courtly's current circumstances, social outlook, and personal characteristics. What principles and desires seem to animate him? Why does he seem to have such an investment in believing that his son is an almost saintly young man?
2. What is Harcourt's son, Charles Courtly, really like? In what sense is he like his father, and in what ways, if any, does he differ from old Sir Harcourt?
3. What is Dazzle's status in the first act? Under what circumstances has he met Charles, and how does he exploit his opportunities once he is in the social circle of Charles, Max Harkaway and Sir Harcourt?
4. In this comedy, Max Harkaway represents a contrast with the views and *mores* of Sir Harcourt Courtly. What contrast, then, does he offer?

**Act 2**

5. What is Grace Harkaway's outlook on marriage, men, and life more generally? To what extent do her pronouncements about these things seem either sincere or affected, deeply rooted or perfunctory? Or need we make such a distinction?
6. How does the plot develop in this act along the lines of assumed identity and deception? What complications arise with regard to Charles Courtly and his father Sir Harcourt?
7. What is Meddle up to in this act and elsewhere? What is his role in the play, and why all the mockery of lawyers? Is there any organic connection between this treatment of Meddle and other thematic concerns?

**Act 3**

8. Lady Gay Spanker (Max's daughter) and her husband Adolphus ("Dolly") enter. What model of marriage do they represent in this act (and in the fourth act, if you are presenting on this question)? What role does Dazzle induce Lady Gay to play with regard to Charles and Grace's developing courtship? Why does she agree?
9. What seems to draw Charles (i.e. "Augustus Hamilton") and Grace to each other—what affinities do they have? In what manner does their courtship progress? In what style does he court her?
10. As for Sir Harcourt, what is it about Lady Gay Spanker that he finds so attractive, and in what manner does he pursue her?

**Act 4**

11. What device does Charles employ to find out whether Grace is really in love with him? How do things play out between Charles and Grace once he puts this stratagem into effect? How much power does the play grant her in the courtship game?

12. Sir Harcourt throws himself at the feet of Lady Gay Spanker. Why does he suppose himself such a brilliant success in his attempt to win over this young woman? How does Lady Gay handle his suit? As with Grace, how much power does the play grant her in the courtship game?

### Act 5

13. In this final act, what comic resolutions are effected, and by what means? On the whole, what values and priorities are affirmed thereby?

14. What is to be made of Dazzle? In what sense is he a “loose end” in this play, and what significance might be derived from this confusion over Dazzle’s place or status?

**Edition:** Stierstorfer, Klaus, ed. *London Assurance and other Victorian Comedies*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001. ISBN-13: 978-0192832962.

## ROBERT BROWNING QUESTIONS

Assigned: “Porphyria’s Lover” (1252-53); “My Last Duchess” (1255-56); “The Bishop Orders His Tomb” (1259-62); “Caliban upon Setebos” (1296-1303).

### “Porphyria’s Lover” (1252-53)

1. What was the relationship between the speaker and Porphyria? Why did he strangle her, and just at the point indicated by his explanation? Getting at the heart of this question calls for reflection on the speaker’s understanding of passion.

2. The Victorians were as fascinated as we are with the kind of aberrant thought processes (we would call it criminal psychopathy) Browning describes in this and many other such poems. Why do you suppose we find psychopaths like Porphyria’s lover so interesting? And when Browning chooses to take on such subjects, what kind of poetry (or social function for poetry) does he implicitly reject?

### “My Last Duchess” (1255-56)

3. Explain the poem’s action—where are the speaker and his guest? Why is the guest present? What has the Duke done? What is he planning to do?

4. The Duke spends most of his energy talking about the late Duchess and her image. What effect does the painting have (or not have) on him as he views it? In what sense is the Duke’s “art criticism” a kind of revenge against the Duchess?

### “The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed’s” (1259-62)



5. Describe the progression of the Bishop's dying requests—how well does he understand his situation?
6. Ruskin, as indicated in the *Norton* note, mentions several "late Renaissance" qualities brought out by Browning's poem: find some instances of them.
7. Characterize the Bishop's religious faith—how seriously do you take his quotations from the Bible at several points in the poem?
8. What sorts of things seem to have animated the Bishop's life, and how does he imagine the afterlife?

### **"Caliban upon Setebos" (1296-1303)**

9. How did Setebos create the world in which Caliban lives, and how does he deal with his creatures? Has Setebos, according to Caliban, worked out his relationship to his creatures?
10. What qualities does Caliban possess in common with the God (Setebos) who is the subject of his speculations? In what ways does Caliban differ from Setebos?
11. What is "the Quiet"? What power does it have, according to Caliban, over Setebos?
12. At what resolution or understanding, if any, does Caliban finally arrive concerning his relation to Setebos?

### **"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" (1266-71)**

13. Consider the Norton editors' note on the interpretive history of "Childe Roland." How do you personally respond to the poem's chivalric and possibly allegorical overtones, and in particular to Roland's concluding determination, "Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set, and blew"? What is the quest or "path" that Roland has been following, and what attitude does he adopt to the sights, sounds, and events he describes?

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## **EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON QUESTIONS**

Assigned: Edward Bulwer-Lytton. *Money*.

### ***Money***

#### **Act 1**

1. In Act 1, Scene 1, we are introduced to Sir John Vesey, the play's reigning patriarch. In what ways does he fail to live up to the expectations a Victorian audience might have had about such a figure? What are Sir John's actual principles, and what are his main concerns in the first act?

2. In Act 1, Scene 1, what is Alfred Evelyn's situation and status before the reading of Mr. Mordaunt's will? How do his sentiments, language, and actions at this point contrast with those of Sir John and his daughter Georgina? What is his relationship with Clara?

3. In Act 1, Scene 1, we meet Sir Frederick Blount, the dandy who seems to be Georgina's favorite before Evelyn suddenly becomes rich. What characterizes Blount's speech and what motives animate his actions? How does Lady Franklin sum up this minor but relevant character? (If you are presenting on this question, you might round off your comments by researching the phenomenon of the "dandy" in Regency and post-Regency England since Blount is a fine example of dandiacal posturing and ethics.)

4. In Act 1, Scene 1, the will is read to the assembled characters. How has old Mordaunt divided up his money—what has he left to each principal person in attendance, and why? This scene has often been described as probably the best in the play—what might account for its popularity, and in what sense is it representative of the values and anxieties that are the stuff of the play as a whole?

## **Act 2**

5. In Act 2, Scene 1, Glossmore and Stout (here as elsewhere) carry on their running battle over who deserves to be elected as an MP (parliamentary representative) for Groginhole, the estate Evelyn has just purchased. What is the nature of their disagreement—that is, what political outlook does each man represent in the England of 1840? (Especially if you are presenting on this question, feel free to refer to additional scenes if they help you respond.)

6. In Act 2, Scenes 1-2, how does the wall of misunderstanding between Evelyn and Clara grow thicker? What events and assumptions, that is, have widened the rift between them since Clara's initial rejection of Evelyn? What reasons are there to retain hope that they might end up together?

## **Act 3**

7. In Act 3, Scenes 1 and 3, respectively, what does Evelyn learn from Graves about Sir John and Georgina's designs on him, and what scheme does he devise to frustrate their intentions and recover the possibility of a match between himself and Clara? What anxieties on Sir John's part give Evelyn an opening to deceive him? (If you are presenting on this question, consider including some comments on the time-honored English characterization of "the rake," as represented in Hogarth and others' visual arts or literary works.)

8. In Act 3, Scene 2, by what specific device does Lady Franklin help Graves get beyond his "perpetual widower" pose? Consider also the play's handling of their unfolding courtship in scenes such as Act 2, Scene 2—what affinities have already begun to bring them together even before the third act? With regard to the play generally, what perspective do these two characters add that makes them extremely valuable to Evelyn and Clara?

**Act 4**

9. In Act 4, Scene 1 (as in Act 2, Scene 1), we hear the perspectives of various tradespeople and artisans regarding Evelyn's situation, which by now seems to be best termed his "plight." What thematic or philosophical value might inhere in Bulwer-Lytton's inclusion of such minor characters' notions about the play's events and key personages? And how does Captain Dudley Smooth manage to placate them and make them useful to his and Evelyn's contrivances?

10. In Act 4, Scene 2, describe the unfolding of the plot Evelyn and Smooth have cooked up: what test of Georgina's virtue do Evelyn's supposed losses allow him to make? What kind of future as a husband and son-in-law does he lay before her and Sir John, and how do they react?

**Act 5**

11. In Act 5, Scenes 1-3, what key information and actions drive the play forwards and lead to the comic dénouement (literally, the "untying" of the plot's obstacles)? How does this information and action help clarify the true nature of the main characters, most particularly Georgina and Clara?

12. In Act 5, Scene 3, the conclusion tallies the successful marriages that are the stuff of comedy: Evelyn and Clara, Georgina and Blount, Lady Franklin and Graves. Everyone has been accommodated, and each sums up what's most necessary to happiness in a phrase, concluding with Evelyn's, "plenty of— Money!" Beyond the most obvious point, what *has* money been good for in this play, now that we have reached the end?

13. General question: while many people seem to have found Bulwer-Lytton's *Money* an engaging play, no-one would confuse it with Shakespeare's comic masterpieces. In spite of its charms, what might this play be said to lack that keeps it from being placed alongside greater ones? What does the playwright's aim seem to be? What doesn't it seem to be?

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**THOMAS CARLYLE QUESTIONS**

Assigned: from *Sartor Resartus* (1005-1024); *Past and Present* (1024-33).

***Sartor Resartus*****General Questions**

1. Look up the dictionary meanings of the word "sage." How do "sages" relate to their hearers or readers? How does Carlyle function as a sage-writer for Victorian readers?

2. What are some characteristics of Carlyle's prose style in any of the selections we are reading? What do you think he is trying to accomplish by means of the attitudes, poses, or styles he adopts?

### **"The Everlasting No"**

3. On 1006-08, how does Teufelsdröckh deal with his loss of religious faith, according to the Editor and Teufelsdröckh's own words? In what sense is he "full of religiosity?" What begins to look like the replacement for his once firm faith in the Christian God?

4. On 1009, how does Teufelsdröckh characterize the threat that yawns before him if he can't find the answer to his spiritual difficulties? How does the admission that the universe might just be "one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine" clarify the problem that confronts Teufelsdröckh?

5. On 1010-11, what is "The Everlasting No" — what has it spoken to Teufelsdröckh in his bewilderment? How does he respond — what assertion allows Teufelsdröckh to defy such resounding negation? What is the "Baphometric Fire-Baptism" that he undergoes?

### **"Centre of Indifference"**

6. On 1011-12, what is "the old inward Satanic School"? How does the Editor characterize its effects in Teufelsdröckh?

7. On 1012-14, how does Teufelsdröckh begin the process of casting out the Satanic School? To what observations, what travels, does he turn his attention for that purpose, and what effect do they have upon his spirit?

8. On 1015-16, Teufelsdröckh waxes eloquent on war. What does he have to say about the causes and effects of war, and what thoughts does he offer concerning his brief interaction with the Great Man, Napoleon? How might Teufelsdröckh's ideas about war and Napoleon mark some progression in his understanding of his predicament?

9. On 1016-17, Teufelsdröckh goes to the North Cape and meets a cantankerous Russian smuggler. What happens between the two men, and what do you take to be the point of placing such a ridiculous episode here at the end of the chapter on the Centre of Indifference?

10. On 1017, what exactly is the Centre of Indifference at which Teufelsdröckh has arrived? In what state of soul or mind does Teufelsdröckh find himself at this point?

### **"The Everlasting Yea"**

11. On 1018-19, how does Teufelsdröckh describe the stage through which he has just passed? What has it made possible for him to move forwards?

12. On 1019 top, the Editor interrupts Teufelsdröckh and offers his own gloss on the Doctor's remarks. What reason does the Editor give for this interruption? Why isn't it a good thing for the readers to hear the whole of what Teufelsdröckh has said in his then-current state of mind?

13. On 1019-20, how does Teufelsdröckh characterize nature? How does this characterization represent a change in his understanding of nature, and how does he now view his fellow human beings?

14. On 1021-22, what, according to Teufelsdröckh, is the cause of "Man's Unhappiness"? Why isn't happiness an appropriate goal for human life? What, then, is the appropriate thing to do, the "Everlasting Yea," as Teufelsdröckh calls it?

15. On 1023-24, what tasks does Teufelsdröckh set for those who, like himself, have realized the necessity of creating new beliefs and institutions to replace the old? How are we to do that, according to the Professor? How do you interpret Teufelsdröckh's statement (borrowed from Goethe) that "America is here or nowhere" (1024)?

### **From *Past and Present***

#### **"Democracy"**

16. On 1025-27, what examples does Carlyle offer of proper relations among humans? How does he describe relations between humans during feudal times? (See his comments on "Gurth.")

17. On 1027-29, how does Carlyle redefine "liberty" and then explore the social and political implications of his new definition of that concept? How does his definition undermine more common ones?

#### **"Captains of Industry"**

18. On 1029-32, what is Carlyle's solution to Britain's social problems? What, that is, does Carlyle say should be done with the working classes and the unemployed, and who should do it?

19. On 1029-32, why does Carlyle borrow a feudal term like "aristocracy" for his new hero-class? What is the implication, that is, of such an anachronistic borrowing for Carlyle's view of historical progress and of his own day's social and political developments?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

#### **In the Norton 7<sup>th</sup> Edition Only**

Assigned: "Wordsworth" and "Coleridge" from *Portraits* (1070-76); from *The French Revolution* (1103-10); "Natural Supernaturalism" from *Sartor Resartus* (1096-1102).

#### **From *Portraits***

### **“Coleridge”**

1. How does Carlyle tie his description of Coleridge’s habits and appearance to the quality and effects of his philosophy upon young visitors? What kind of comment on the relevance of romantic thought to a new era does the portrait amount to?

### **“Wordsworth”**

2. In what way might this portrait be a comment on Wordsworth’s ultimate value to British life and letters? How does Carlyle characterize the progress of Wordsworth’s career?

3. What effect does the final description of Wordsworth chewing raisins and hiding behind a green circle to shield his eyes have on the rest of the portrait?

### ***The French Revolution***

#### **“September 1792 in Paris”**

4. What does Carlyle, in his description of the imprisoned Swiss Guard and of the Princess de Lamballe, imply about the possibility of heroism in the face of mob rule?

#### **“Place de la Revolution”**

5. How does Carlyle contrast King Louis XVI with the men who led him to the guillotine? What is the value in offering a fairly detailed portrait of the King in his final hours?

6. What does Carlyle imply about the forces underlying the apparent chaos of the French Revolution? Is it really chaos that rules the day? If not, what is really “behind” that great event?

7. To what extent, according to Carlyle, do those who carry out or live through great events actually understand them?

#### **“Cause and Effect”**

8. What historical perspective does Carlyle offer on what is, by 1837, a long-past event and set of political actors in that event? Why, from your knowledge of the early Victorian period, is the French Revolution still important to Carlyle’s British contemporaries?

#### **“Natural Supernaturalism” from *Sartor Resartus***

9. On 1096-97, what is Professor Teufelsdröckh’s “Philosophy of Clothes,” and how is it best understood as a kind of Transcendentalism?

10. On 1098-99, we find the heart of Teufelsdröckh’s redefinition of human nature, language, and institutions. How is man like a “Minnow”? What insights does the Professor offer concerning custom, language, and even space and time? How do they all, most significantly, keep us ignorant of the truly miraculous in nature and ourselves?

11. On 1100-02, what is the culmination of meditation on the miraculous? In what sense are we "Spirits" after all? What do you take to be the significance of the statement on 100, "believe it thou must; understand it thou canst not"? Why must we believe the Professor's truths even if he hasn't made them entirely comprehensible to us?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 7th ed. Vol. 2B. New York: Norton, 2000. ISBN 0-393-97569-X.

### **THOMAS CARLYLE QUESTIONS, ADDITIONAL (WR139 AT UC IRVINE)**

#### **Older Set: "Manchester Insurrection" from *Past and Present***

1. What does Carlyle appear to think of "insurrectionism"? What, that is, does he seem to think about that working class gathering at St. Peter's Fields, 1819? And what does he say about the government forces that dispersed it by violence?
2. Try to explain what Carlyle means by the "Sphinx riddle" (pg. 20). Does he offer in this chapter any hint of a solution to the human problem this riddle implies?

#### **Older Set: "Gospel of Mammonism" from *Past and Present***

3. Can you expound upon the Gospel of Mammonism? Give us a brief sermon from this gospel, and explain who, according to Carlyle, most loudly preaches it.
4. What effect has Britain's practice of this gospel's precepts had upon all human bonds, all sense of belonging and identity?
5. Why is it so impossible to help that poor Irish widow, the one who dies and infects seventeen others with typhus?

#### **Older Set: "Captains of Industry" from *Past and Present***

6. What is Carlyle's solution to Britain's social problems? What, that is, does Carlyle say should be done with the working classes and the unemployed, and who should do it?
7. Does Carlyle want to go backward to a feudal, agrarian order, or forward to a just industrialism?
8. Is Carlyle interested in what we might call democracy? Why does he call his new hero-class an "aristocracy?"

#### **Older Set: "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question"**

9. What characteristics does Carlyle give his narrator, Dr. Phelim M'Quirk? Why does Carlyle want—or need—such a narrator to make a suspiciously "Carlylean" argument concerning Britain's West-Indian possessions?

10. According to M'Quirk, in what ways do West Indian blacks differ in nature from British whites? By what artistic means does author Carlyle delineate these alleged differences? Does M'Quirk argue that black people in the West Indies (or elsewhere, for that matter) should be treated differently from Europeans?

11. How does Carlyle's basic analysis of the situation in the West Indies compare to the analysis of English poverty and social disorder we studied in *Past and Present*? What has changed, and what remains constant?

**Edition:** Carlyle, Thomas. *Past and Present*. New York: Scribner's, 1918.

### THOMAS CARLYLE QUESTIONS, ADDITIONAL (MERMING/TUCKER ANTHOLOGY)

Assigned: "Signs of the Times" (1829); from *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1840); from *Past and Present* (1843).

#### General Questions

1. Look up the dictionary meanings of the word "sage." How does Carlyle function as a sage for Victorian readers?
2. What are some characteristics of Carlyle's prose style in any of the selections we are reading?

#### "Signs of the Times" (1829)

3. To what extent do you find Carlyle's style in this essay journalistic? In what ways does his style differ from that of journalism?
4. What is "the mechanical" according to Carlyle? Why are those who seek reforms in a "mechanical" way unable to solve Britain's problems?
5. How does the "dynamical" power (169) oppose the mechanical? How does Carlyle describe this force? What is the proper relationship between the mechanical and the dynamical power?
6. How does Carlyle, who lost his Scottish Calvinist faith by early adulthood, nonetheless preserve the rhetorical structures and value system of Christianity? For example, what is the value of "mystery" to human beings?
7. Where should Carlyle's readers look for relief or sustenance, if not to existing governmental structures or political debates between utilitarian Benthamites and aristocratic conservatives? What does he say about the present state of institutional religion and literature (most particularly romantic poetry)?
8. Does Carlyle closely define the most important of his terms, such as Nature, the Dynamical, Truth, Goodness, Beauty, Inward Perfection, Mystery, and the Infinite? Why might he not want to define such terms—does linguistic vagueness help him achieve his rhetorical purpose? If so, how?



9. Some critics have said that Carlyle insists upon belief in moral absolutes even though he no longer believes in the Christian faith from which those absolutes derive. If you find that “Signs” fits that description, is the essay a convincing response to the “crisis of authority”? Or do you consider Carlyle a reactionary who wants to return his countrymen to some modern approximation of feudal, conservative values rather than to accept the need for systemic (i.e. scientific and wide-reaching) social and political reforms?

**From *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1840)**

**“The Hero as Divinity”**

10. How is history “the biography of Great Men?” In what sense is Carlyle’s promotion of the Great Man theory of history a substitute for traditional religious faith? How, for example, does Carlyle define “worship” and “hero-worship”?

11. How does Carlyle, in offering his thoughts on the significance of early Scandinavian myth, (most specifically the god Odin), also make an argument about the relationship between language and nature? What did Odin do that was so significant as to cause his deification?

12. What keeps modern humans from discerning the “mystery” or “divinity” in their surroundings and in themselves, and how might they recover that power or some modern approximation of or equivalent for it? What role in this recovery might the prophet or poet play?

**From *Past and Present* (1843)**

**“Midas”**

13. What does Carlyle appear to mean by “enchantment”? Who is enchanted, and why?

14. What is Carlyle’s attitude towards the “Poor Law” of 1834, which provided relief only to the disabled and required others to enter “workhouses”?

15. What rhetorical value does Carlyle derive from the grotesque or ridiculous anecdotes and historical references he sometimes includes? See, for instance, his reference to the “Ugolino Hunger Cellar” or the Stockport Cellar” case as well as the “Midas” legend that gave this chapter its name.

**“Sphinx”**

16. What was the Sphinx’s riddle in Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*? What is it in Carlyle’s chapter?

17. What wrong answer to the Sphinx Riddle has been given by Carlyle’s contemporaries, and what are the consequences of their failure?

18. What kinds of rhetorical oppositions does Carlyle employ to convince us that there is such a thing as Justice in the universe, even if we don’t see it working? Does he ever define what he means by “justice”? As in the question about “Signs of the Times,” how does linguistic vagueness help him achieve his rhetorical purpose?

### **“Gospel of Mammonism”**

19. Can you expound upon the Gospel of Mammonism? Give us a brief sermon from this gospel, and explain who, according to Carlyle, most loudly preaches it.
20. What effect has Britain’s practice of this gospel’s precepts had upon all human bonds, all sense of belonging and identity?
21. Why is it “impossible” to help the poor Irish widow who dies and infects seventeen others with typhus?

### **“Happy”**

22. How does Carlyle define “happiness”? In what does happiness consist? Whose idea of happiness is he opposing in this chapter?

**Edition:** Mermin, Dorothy and Herbert Tucker. *Victorian Literature: 1830-1900*. Heinle & Heinle / Harcourt, 2001-02. ISBN 0155071777.

## **LEWIS CARROLL QUESTIONS**

Assigned: “Jabberwocky” (1530); Humpty Dumpty’s Explication (1530-31); “The Walrus and the Carpenter” (1670-72, 7<sup>th</sup> edition).

### **“Jabberwocky” and Humpty Dumpty’s Explication**

1. What does a poem like this suggest to you about the way language works? A suggestion: the odd thing is that many of the poem’s words are not exactly in the dictionary, but they seem to mean something nonetheless. Why?
2. How does Humpty Dumpty explain the story’s meaning—what narrative of events emerges from his interpretation?

### **“The Walrus and the Carpenter” (7<sup>th</sup> edition only)**

3. How does this poem handle its disturbing themes—duplicity and violence? How does the comic aspect of this poem react with the darker side of it? Would you say it is more light and fun, or more disturbing and dark? Why?
4. How do you interpret the difference between the Walrus and the Carpenter regarding their intentions towards the oysters, or at least between the attitude they take towards what might be a common intention?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

## **CHARLES DARWIN QUESTIONS**

Assigned: "Tierra del Fuego," Ch. 10 from *The Voyage of the Beagle*; "Struggle for Existence," Ch. 3 from *The Origin of Species*.

**"Tierra del Fuego," Ch. 10 from *Voyage of the Beagle***

1. The HMS Beagle set sail in 1831 with a commission to explore the South American coast and compile longitudinal data. As a naturalist, Darwin had the task of cataloging the region's flora and fauna. To see how he carries out this task when dealing with the Fuegian tribes, make a list of Fuegian (i.e. "savage") qualities and list their "civilized" opposites in a second column. Why might a modern anthropologist trained in the study of comparative culture find such binary categorizations disturbing?
2. Compare and contrast Darwin's attitude and his method of observation when he describes the natural environment of Tierra del Fuego and when he discusses the Beagle crew's contacts with the region's human inhabitants.
3. Do Darwin's accounts of Fuegian cannibalism and other misbehavior sound convincing to you? If those accounts are not accurate, how might Darwin have come to believe in them and present them to his readers as the truth?

**"Struggle for Existence," Ch. 3 from *Origin of Species***

4. What is natural selection? How does it compare to the kind of selection that humans have long practiced on domestic animals? Incidentally, what do you think Darwin would say about today's experiments with cloning—would he approve?
5. How does Darwin define his term "Struggle for Existence," and why must this struggle take place—what "checks to increase" cause hardship for animals?
6. On the whole, what perspective on or attitude toward Nature emerges in this chapter? If you had to personify (give human characteristics to) Darwin's Nature, what terms would you use to describe how it treats animal life on earth?

**Edition:** Mermin, Dorothy and Herbert Tucker. *Victorian Literature: 1830-1900*. Heinle & Heinle / Harcourt, 2001-02. ISBN 0155071777.

**CHARLES DARWIN QUESTIONS, NEW VERSION OF *THE DESCENT OF MAN*, CH. 4**

Assigned: Charles Darwin. Ch. 4 from *The Descent of Man*.

**From *The Descent of Man***

1. What are the "social instincts" to which Darwin keeps referring? Over the first several pages of his essay (from the paragraph that begins "Sociability.- Animals of many kinds are social. . . ." and ending just before the point where the topic of discussion transitions to human beings, i.e. at "Man a social animal."), how does Darwin delineate and distinguish the social instincts, discuss their probable origin,

and illustrate their practical effects upon animal behavior? How are the social instincts valuable to the survival of a given species?

2. When Darwin transitions at the paragraph beginning “Man a social animal,” how does he analyze the social instincts’ importance for human development? How does he define “a moral being”? How does the moral sense seem to have originated, and how does it eventually more or less triumph over stronger, yet less enduring instincts (self-preservation, hunger, etc.) In responding, consider the paragraphs up to and including the one that begins “It is obvious that every one may with an easy conscience gratify his own desires . . . .”

3. From the paragraph beginning, “Slavery, although in some ways beneficial during ancient times . . . .” to and including the one beginning “We have now seen that actions are regarded by savages . . . .” how does Darwin analyze the behavior and sensibilities of so-called primitive people? What can’t they do that more civilized people can? But at the same time, what positive remarks does Darwin make about primitive virtues such as courage and self-sacrifice?

4. From the paragraph beginning, “Concluding remarks. . . .” how does Darwin criticize the notion that the utilitarian “greatest happiness principle” explains the development of the moral sense? Why isn’t individual pleasure a sufficient vehicle for moral conduct or development? Nonetheless, to what extent does Darwin find a use for happiness in his discussion of the social instincts and morality?

5. Darwin’s final remarks (starting with the paragraph “Finally, the social instincts...” although you might want to go back to the paragraph beginning “Notwithstanding many sources...”) seem optimistic in tone. What does Darwin apparently with regard to humanity’s future moral development? Do his remarks amount to something like a firm belief in that Victorian staple, “progress”? How do you feel about the kind of optimism he expresses—do you find his positive take on the evolution of our moral capacities convincing? Why or why not?

**Edition:** Darwin, Charles. Ch. 4 from *The Descent of Man*.

#### **CHARLES DARWIN QUESTIONS, ADDITIONAL (WR139 AT UC IRVINE)**

##### **“The Moral Sense,” Ch. 4 from *The Descent of Man***

7. Contrast Darwin’s ideas about humans’ “social instincts” to John Stuart Mill’s notions about human nature and instincts. (Especially relevant would be Darwin’s footnote about Mill early in Chapter 4.) For each author, what experiences satisfy people and allow them to thrive?

8. To follow up on this question, what reason does Darwin give for the development of the social instincts in humankind?

9. Describe Darwin’s account of the development of the moral sense: how did this sense arise, and what evolutionary purpose does it serve?

10. Does Darwin's account of man's moral evolution strip him of the right to use the term "morality" in the older, religious sense, that of an absolute standard of right and wrong behavior?

11. Is Darwin an optimist, a believer in progress? Pay attention to his rhetorical emphasis in this chapter—does he believe that humanity is already at a high stage of development and that it may evolve to an even higher intellectual or moral plateau?

**"The Races of Man," Ch. 7 from *The Descent of Man*"**

12. How careful a scientist is Darwin? Does he treat the arguments of others at length and fairly? Does he make a good case for his own ideas about human races?

13. Does Darwin "buy into" the idea that there are differences in intellect among the various races?

**"General Summary," Ch. 21 from *The Descent of Man*"**

14. Try to explain the importance of "sexual selection" in Darwin's scheme.

15. Find passages in which Darwin seems to be borrowing from the discipline of political economy. Does he sometimes sound like a "social Darwinist?" Where?

16. What are your thoughts concerning the last few pages of the "General Summary"? Here, Darwin describes his feelings upon landing in Tierra del Fuego with the other members of the Beagle Expedition.

**Edition:** I don't recall the specific edition, but the questions should suit any good edition.

## CHARLES DICKENS QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Hard Times*.

### *Hard Times*

1. Critics have generally said that Dickens' characters are caricature-like. Do you find that description accurate? In what sense might a "caricature" actually be more realistic than the usual kind of true-to-life character delineation we find in realistic novels?

2. People who dislike Dickens sometimes say that his novels are too sentimental, too "pat." Be that as it may, what is unsentimental about *Hard Times*, with respect to its plot, its character treatment, and its conclusion?

3. What is Dickens' basic criticism of Utilitarian philosophy in this novel? How would you compare and contrast the novel's criticisms with those offered by John Stuart Mill in the Norton selection from his *Autobiography*?

4. Working-class character Stephen Blackpool is among the more appealing characters in the novel—to what extent, if at all, do his insights go beyond the limitations placed upon him by poverty and class discrimination?
5. What is the difference between Louisa and the brother upon whom she dotes? In what sense is Louise better than he is?
6. To what extent is Josiah Bounderby's conduct an indictment on Dickens' part of the widespread *laissez-faire* ideology of the mid-Victorian Era? What are the basic tenets of that ideology, and how does Bounderby claim to exemplify them? How does he in fact betray them?
7. On the whole, do you think that Dickens' social novel *Hard Times* advocates direct changes in British life? Is it reasonable to expect a novel to do that? What is the value in the kind of hard-hitting criticism and characterization that we find in *Hard Times*?

**Edition:** Dickens, Charles. *Hard Times*. New York: Dover, 2001. ISBN 0486419207.

## SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE QUESTIONS

Assigned: "The Final Problem."

### "The Final Problem"

1. Nothing rouses the sometimes opium-drenched powers of Sherlock Holmes like a confrontation with his evil opposite, Professor Moriarty. In fact, Holmes is nearly obsessed with Moriarty. How does he describe the Professor's appearance and manner? What degree of power does he attribute to him in London's criminal underworld?
2. Characterize Sherlock Holmes and his crime-fighting method. According to what principle does his mind work? A good outsider reference to help you respond would be the chapter "The Science of Deduction" at the beginning of Doyle's *The Sign of Four* (*Complete Novels and Stories* Vol. I, 107-13).
3. Explain how Doctor Watson, the retired army surgeon who is both Holmes' friend and the narrator of his exploits, serves as a foil for the detective: what methodology and attitude towards crime and life more generally does the Doctor represent?

**Edition:** Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan. "The Final Problem" from *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (642-59). *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Novels and Stories*, Vol. I. New York: Bantam, 1986. ISBN 0-553-21241-9.

## GEORGE ELIOT QUESTIONS

Assigned: "Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft" (1337-42).

### "Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft"

1. Explore the grounds upon which George Eliot (her real name was Marian Evans) condemns facile attempts to delineate woman's alleged "nature."
2. Eliot, following the Enlightenment author Mary Wollstonecraft, argues strongly against female improvement schemes that emphasize women's superior "sensibility." Why does she oppose this conception? (Look up the term "sensibility" in the Oxford English Dictionary—the word has specific eighteenth-century connotations.)
3. Does Eliot, again following Wollstonecraft, appear to believe that the average woman of 1855 is the intellectual or ethical equal of her male counterparts? (Eliot is not talking about any purportedly *innate* distinctions between the sexes; she is considering only *actual* accomplishments and behavior.)
4. What, according to George Eliot, must be done to improve the condition of females?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

## EDWARD FITZGERALD QUESTIONS

Assigned: "The Rubáiyát of Omar Kayyám" (1212-21).

### "The Rubáiyát of Omar Kayyám"

1. Describe the progress of this poem in terms of the emotional states through which the speaker passes and the main ideas he entertains. Does he arrive at a satisfying conclusion to his reflections? Why or why not?
2. What would you say the speaker is searching for—what would satisfy him? Happiness? Clarity? Connection to something beyond himself? Or something else?
3. What religious and philosophical systems does the narrator explore? What ultimate view does he arrive at concerning such systems?
4. What virtues does wine or "the grape" possess? What does it do for the speaker—to what degree is drink the answer to the questions explored by the speaker?
5. What is the significance of nature in this poem? What connections are made between nature and humanity? What is the relationship between the speaker's state of mind and nature?
6. How do the formal attributes of the poem reinforce its attitude towards the subject matter? In other words, how does the stanzaic patterning go along with the speaker's apparent feelings and intellectual observations?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

## JAMES FROUDE QUESTIONS

Assigned: Ch. 5 from *The English in the West Indies; or, The Bow of Ulysses*.

### Ch. 5 from *The English in the West Indies; or, The Bow of Ulysses*

1. At the beginning of Chapter 5, how does Froude distinguish between the white and black West Indians aboard his ship?
2. Chapter 5, like the rest of the book, supposedly draws upon Froude's direct experience as an observer of West Indian people and customs. In light of the material contained in Chapter 5, how legitimate is Froude's title to claim such experience?
3. In what ways does Froude follow Carlyle in matters of race?
4. In what sense do the West Indies, by Froude's implication, present a threat to British values and colonial resolve?

**Edition:** Froude, James A. *The English in the West Indies; or, The Bow of Ulysses*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1888.

## MOHANDAS GANDHI QUESTIONS

Assigned: "Satyagraha" from *Non-Violent Resistance*.

### Definition of Satyagraha, from *Non-Violent Resistance*

1. What is Satyagraha, and how does it differ from the other forms of resistance identified by Gandhi? How is it not, for example, simply "passive resistance"?
2. How does Gandhi, leader of mass movements, distribute the burden of resistance over the entire population in his campaign against the Rowlatt Act in India? {The Rowlatt Act was passed in March 1919. According to the editors of our selection, the Act "gave arbitrary powers to the authorities to arrest, confine, imprison or otherwise punish persons who were suspected to be concerned in movements prejudicial to the security of the State."}
3. What lesson does Gandhi impart by recounting how he vowed to Kasturba, his wife, to give up salt and pulses for a whole year? In other words, why does the vow serve as an instance of Satyagraha?
4. What danger and responsibility does Gandhi recognize in his position as an organizer of mass campaigns? Refer to the sections on to his arrest and the consequences that followed.

**Edition:** Gandhi, Mohandas K. *Non-Violent Resistance*. New York: Schocken, 1961. 3-9. The 2001 Dover edition, which is most easily available, probably contains the same material: ISBN 0486416062.

## ELIZABETH GASKELL QUESTIONS



Assigned: Elizabeth Gaskell. *Cranford* (Oxford UP edition).

## **Cranford**

1. In Chapter 1, how does the narrator (Mary Smith) initially characterize Cranford's society, which consists mostly of unmarried older women and widows? What is this place like, and what do we learn about the attitudes, interests, and habits of these women? What makes them a community rather than a group of isolated individuals? (If you are presenting, feel free to refer also to the second chapter in responding.)
2. In Chapter 1, what effect does Captain Brown have on this female society? What kind of figure does he cut amongst the women? What friction arises because of his presence, and what good does he do Cranford in this first chapter?
3. In Chapter 2, what more do we learn about Captain Brown's family life and situation? In what manner does he die, and why do you suppose Gaskell chooses to eliminate him in this way and at this time?
4. In Chapter 3, what reflection does the narrator offer on her relation to Cranford now that she has lived in Drumble for some time?
5. In Chapters 3-4, what story is recounted about Matty's brush with a suitor (Thomas Holbrook) long ago? What happens when they meet by accident now, many years later—what sort of man is he, and what effect does meeting him again have on her sensibilities? What does the narrator add beyond the story with regard to Matty's understanding of men generally?
6. In Chapter 4, how is Gaskell's narrative style characteristic of her approach in the novel as a whole? How does the story move forward in this chapter? What sort of information do we get besides the main recounting about the goings-on between Matty and Mr. Holbrook? How is that additional information related to the chapter's main event (i.e. the Matty/Holbrook story)?
7. In Chapter 5, the narrator begins by reflecting upon people's foolish little obsessions, and then recounts how Matty decided to look over the old family letters one last time. What prompts Matty to do this, and why does she burn them after reading them over? What might we infer from this episode about the status of memory and continuity in this novel that is so often concerned with memories and bonds of affection among people?
8. In Chapter 6, what story is recounted about "Poor Peter," brother of Matty and Deborah Jenkyns? Why did he run away to the wars, and what effect did his untimely departure have on the family—on the parents and also on Deborah and Matty?
9. In Chapter 7, Miss Betty Barker invites Cranford's key women to her home. Who gets invited, and who doesn't? Why the "disinvite"? What becomes apparent about the town's concern for manners,

gentility, and rank? How does it inflect the perceptions and behavior of those who attend Miss Barker's dinner?

10. In Chapter 8, the Cranford ladies get to know Lady Glenmire. How does her meeting with the women go, and how does this chapter continue the previous one's concern for manners, gentility and rank?

11. In Chapters 9-10, Signor Brunoni the conjuror comes to town and gives a performance. How is his arrival related to the "panic" of Chapter 9? What sorts of stories do the frightened women tell, and more importantly, what do these two chapters suggest about the relation or balance in Cranford between actual events and imagination, between stories and "real life"?

12. In Chapter 11, what real-life story comes to light about "Signor Brunoni"? Who is this man, and what happened to him and his wife in India? How is this chapter, with its intrusion of a genuine "slice of life" from beyond Cranford, relevant to the town itself—in what sense might we take it as partly a reflection on the value of marriage and having children?

13. In Chapter 12, we learn that Lady Glenmire is going to marry Mr. Hoggins. What new round of concerns about social protocol and rank does this news spark in Cranford?

14. In Chapter 13, it turns out that the Town and Country Bank (a joint stock operation) that has long held Matty's assets is about to fail. What does she do in the face of this disaster? What qualities does she reveal that hitherto may not have been apparent to anyone?

15. In Chapter 14, how does the small society of Cranford come together to help Matty deal with the disastrous downturn in her finances? Who does what, and what qualities show in the several helpers? And how is Jem Hearn the joiner dealing with his impending marriage with Matty's servant Martha?

16. In Chapter 15, Matty's long-lost brother Peter returns to Cranford. What kind of life has he led, and how does he help to resolve Matty's difficulties? There have been a number of men to regard in Cranford since the beginning of this novel. How might Peter's return be said to cap off the book's gender relations in a satisfying way? (If you are presenting on this question, you might want to consider Peter's role in Chapter 16 as well.)

17. In Chapter 16, the last loose end is tied up when Peter deftly re-establishes good relations between Mrs. Jamieson and Lady Glenmire (Mrs. Hoggins, that is). What final reflections does the narrator offer about Cranford and in particular about Miss Matty Jenkyns? What attitude towards Cranford and its prospects for the future might we adopt as a result of this final chapter?

**Edition.** Gaskell, Elizabeth. *Cranford*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. ISBN-13: 978-0192832092.

## H. RIDER HAGGARD QUESTIONS

Assigned: *King Solomon's Mines* (separate text).

## *King Solomon's Mines*

### **Chapter 1**

1. How does Allan Quatermain get involved in the quest of Sir Henry Curtis and Captain Good? What is Sir Henry's story—why has he come to Africa?
2. What makes Quatermain a sympathetic narrator—what qualities might we (or a Victorian audience) find appealing in him?

### **Chapter 2**

3. What is the story of Jose da Silvestra? And what has apparently happened to Sir Henry's brother?

### **Chapter 3**

4. When he is asked to accompany Sir Henry, what terms does Quatermain make for his acceptance? Aside from those terms, what further considerations lead to his acceptance?
5. What story does one of the servants, Umbopa, tell about his origins and his reason for wanting to go on an expedition with Europeans? What special qualities does Umbopa show?

### **Chapter 4**

6. This chapter contains one of Haggard's frequent concentrations on hunting—how does he turn this activity into a metaphor for the meaning of human life more generally?

### **Chapter 5**

7. What parallels between Umbopa and Sir Henry Curtis develop in this chapter?

### **Chapters 6-7**

8. In these two chapters, the expedition members pass through extreme heat and cold as they make their way towards and then up the mountain on da Silvestra's map. Recountings of this sort are usually hard to put down—what do you think accounts for their success as narrative?

### **Chapters 7-8**

9. What is the first meeting between the expedition and the Kukuana people like? What impresses the Kukuanas about the expedition, and what impression do they make in their own right?
10. What is the story of Twala's rise to the throne? What did the old woman "Gagool" have to do with it?
11. By what means does Haggard represent Africa as a place of eternal mystery, a "Dark Continent" rather than as simply a place like any other in terms of geography, history and inhabitants?

### Chapters 9-10

12. On what principle does Twala evidently govern his kingdom? Who is Gagool, and how does her witch-hunt embody Twala's manner of governing his people?
13. What does Umbopa reveal about himself in the tenth chapter? Why do his white companions agree to help him?

### Chapter 11

14. How does Quatermain prevent the sacrifice of the dancer Foulata? What happens as soon as his gambit succeeds?
15. What are *The Ingoldsby Legends*, and what does Quatermain the narrator's interest in them suggest about him? (Use the internet to find out what you can about this once-popular text.)

### Chapters 12-14

16. These three chapters detail preparations for Ignosi's ("Umbopa's") battle against the usurper Twala's larger force, and then the extended battle itself. What different perspectives on war do the Europeans show in their words and actions—consider mainly Quatermain and Sir Henry Curtis.
17. How much regard does the narrator show for the (imaginary) Kukuana tribe's battle tactics? What is Ignosi's war plan, and what adaptive moves does he make? How does Twala measure up as an opponent?

### Chapters 15-16

18. In these two chapters, Foulata's nursing aids Good's recovery, and Ignosi forces Gagool to take the expedition to the cave where they will find King Solomon's diamonds. How does Ignosi regard Gagool, and why does she finally agree to help the white men? What macabre scene awaits them when they arrive?

### Chapters 17-18

19. What befalls the party of Quatermain, Sir Henry, Good, and Foulata when they finally gain entrance to Solomon's chamber? What virtues get them out of the fix they are in, and what becomes of their quest for untold wealth?

### Chapters 19-20

20. What is Quatermain's retrospective opinion on the value of his exploits in Africa? Why have his friends—now back in England—so far refrained from talking about their experience?
21. On the whole, what impression of Africa do you suppose such tales as Haggard's made upon average Victorian readers? What about the effect of adventure tales or similar popular genres today—

do you think they influence people's opinions about important social and political matters? Or do readers/moviegoers just understand them for what they are—not reality but fiction?

**Edition:** Haggard, H. Rider. *King Solomon's Mines*. Ed. Dennis Butts. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. ISBN 0192834851.

## GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS QUESTIONS

Assigned: "God's Grandeur" (1516); "The Starlight Night" (1516-17); "As Kingfishers Catch Fire" (1517); "Spring" (1517); "The Windhover" (1518); "Pied Beauty" (1518); "Hurrahing in Harvest" (1519); "Binsey Poplars" (1519); "Duns Scotus's Oxford" (1520); "Felix Randal" (1520-21); "Spring and Fall" (1521); "Carrion Comfort" (1521-22); "No Worst, There is None" (1522); "I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, Not Day" (1522-23); "That Nature Is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection" (1523); "Thou Art Indeed Just, Lord" (1524).

### "God's Grandeur"

1. What failure does Hopkins charge common human beings with? What do they fail to perceive in nature, and why?
2. How does this poem assert the capacity of poetic language to celebrate God? What does the poet's description of nature have to do with his determination to praise God?

### "The Starlight Night"

3. Why does the speaker interpret the stars in the manner that he speaker does, with the help of earthly analogies? How do this sonnet's octet and sestet, taken together, celebrate "the grandeur of God"?

### "As Kingfishers Catch Fire"

4. How does the "selving" of natural things, as explained in the first stanza or octet, set up a pattern for human beings to follow?
5. How is human "selving" different from and higher than that of nature, according to the speaker?

### "Spring"

6. What power does the speaker ascribe to nature? Which is more important in this poem—the perceiver, or nature? Explain.
7. What prayer to Christ does the poem's sestet make? How would you compare this poem's emphasis on childhood innocence to romantic poems on the same theme (Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality" or Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," for example)?

### "The Windhover"

8. Compare this poem to Tennyson's "The Eagle." What is similar, and what differs between the two poems with respect to the speaker's way of observing a bird of prey in flight, and any broader significance that may be drawn from the observation of nature?

9. How does the sestet (the final six lines) complete the poem's meaning—why, with regard to the speaker's perception of the Windhover diving, is there "No wonder of it," and what do the references to the shiny plough and "blue-bleak embers" add to your understanding?

### **"Pied Beauty"**

10. How does this poem attempt to liberate nature from saturation by human consciousness? How might that attempt be said to distinguish Hopkins' treatment of nature from the romantics' treatment of it?

11. The poem ends with the line "praise him"—i.e. praise God for the great diversity of things as described in the first ten lines. How is the appreciation of nature's diversity, for Hopkins, an affirmation of God's creative energy? To respond, you might want to refer to the Norton introduction's explanation of Hopkins' affinities with Duns Scotus.

### **"Hurrahing in Harvest"**

12. How does the speaker's interaction with nature lead him to an appreciation of God? What's the relation between the speaker and nature, and between God and nature, in this poem?

### **"Binsey Poplars"**

13. Connect this poem to what your Norton introduction says about Hopkins' doctrines of "inscape" and "instress." How does this poem dramatize a failure of "instress" on the part of those who have chopped down the stand of poplars?

### **"Duns Scotus's Oxford"**

14. How does the speaker particularize Oxford, and how is his mention of Duns Scotus, the "subtle doctor" of scholastic fame, part of that particularization?

15. What is the speaker's complaint about modernity's intrusion into the Oxford schoolscape and landscape, over and above the obvious "uglification" of the scenery? As with "Binsey Poplars," connect this poem to what your Norton Introduction says on page 1649 about Hopkins' doctrines of "inscape" and "instress."

### **"Felix Randal"**

16. How does Hopkins, as a Jesuit priest who has ministered to the blacksmith Felix Randal, respond to the man's death?

17. In what sense is this poem a meditation on the difficulty of “looking to the end,” both for the priest and for the once active blacksmith?

**“Spring and Fall”**

18. Explain the latter part of the poem—what does the falling of the leaves symbolize?

19. How is the poem more an expression of the speaker’s state of mind than of young Margaret’s?

**“Carrion Comfort”**

20. Why does the speaker describe despair as “carrion comfort”? Is despair the same thing as apathy, or is it a different state of mind than apathy? Explain.

21. Why does the speaker turn on Christ and argue with him in the second stanza? What accusation does he level against Christ?

22. What is the quality of the affirmation that the speaker makes, or the resolution at which he arrives, in this poem? What can he do about his depression?

**“No Worst, There is None”**

23. What is this lowest state of the soul that the speaker describes? Why is it appropriate to describe it as a kind of personal hell?

24. Compare the poem’s last three lines to Swinburne’s final lines in “Hymn to Proserpine.” Why is the thought ultimately not comforting to Hopkins?

**“I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, Not Day”**

25. Describe the psychology of depression that Hopkins is exploring. Why is it so difficult to escape the mental state he finds himself in?

**“That Nature Is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection”**

26. How is nature a destructive force in the first part of the poem? What links nature’s energy with that of the Resurrection?

27. How does the poem figure the power and scope of the Resurrection? What images, what poetic strategy, help Hopkins accomplish that task?

**“Thou Art Indeed Just, Lord”**

28. Why does the speaker argue with God—what emotional purpose does arguing with God serve for the speaker?

29. This poem is rather formally structured—why is that appropriate to the subject matter?

**From *Journals***

30. To what extent are Hopkins' observations about perception and nature similar to the reflections on those things in his poetry? Find a few instances in the journals that help you understand the poetry and explain how they help in that regard.

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

**"The Wreck of the Deutschland"**

31. This poem's structure is bipartite. Identify them and explain how they are related to each other in terms of theme and stylistic characteristics.

32. Explore the language and imagery Hopkins employs to describe the violent event (a shipwreck during a terrible storm): how do his choices help to convey the sudden peril and destructiveness of this event?

33. Why is a stormy shipwreck such an appropriate event to focus on in terms of Hopkins' Catholic religious perspective – what does it tell us about the human condition?

34. How does the narrator relate to the sufferers on board? How does the narrator relate to and portray God? What does God have to do with the wreck of the Deutschland?

35. To what extent is this poem about the narrator's own spiritual situation, and to what degree is it an elegy about the wreck and the suffering of those on board? How does the conclusion of the poem affect your response to this question, and why?

**Edition:** "The Wreck of the Deutschland" ([E-Text](#)).

## THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY QUESTIONS

Assigned: from "Science and Culture" (1429-35).

**From "Science and Culture"**

5. On 1429-31, why, according to Huxley, do practical men of business oppose scientific study? How does he use Josiah Mason's life story, culminating in the founding of a scientific college, to counter such opposition?

6. On 1431, why, according to Huxley, do many graduates of England's great universities, Oxford and Cambridge, also oppose scientific education? What sort of education do these "Oxbridge men" themselves receive?



7. On 1431-32, Huxley quotes and then analyzes Matthew Arnold's statement that the pursuit of culture involves knowing "the best that has been known and thought in the world" (1431). Of what, for the most part, does this "best" consist? Why does Arnold, as Huxley describes his argument, believe that classical texts are vital to European culture? How does Huxley counter Arnold's reasoning?
8. On 1432-34, how does Huxley enlist history in promoting scientific education? On what grounds did Renaissance Humanists oppose the medieval Church? In what way do the Victorian Humanist opponents of science in the schools now occupy much the same position as the medieval Church theologians once did?
9. On 1434-35, Huxley agrees with Arnold that culture is at base a "criticism of life." But Huxley insists that now, by the Victorian Era, the very conception of life (of human life, and of the natural environment) has changed. How, then, must education change to meet this new conception?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

Assigned: "Prolegomena" from *Evolution and Ethics*.

#### **"Prolegomena" from *Evolution and Ethics***

1. How does the "state of art" counteract the "state of nature" (the "cosmic process")?
2. What purpose does Huxley's "gardening" metaphor for evolution serve?
3. Describe Huxley's formulation of the "ethical process" in evolution. Does Huxley adhere to Darwin's narrative of the evolution of the moral sense from more primitive social instincts?
4. From Section IX onward, Huxley shifts resolutely toward explaining the differences between cosmic evolution and the modifications that have taken place in human civilization. Show Huxley undercutting Spencer's application of so-called general laws to the analysis of human societies.

**Edition:** Huxley, Thomas Henry. *Evolution & Ethics*. Eds. Paradis, James and George C. Williams. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1989. ISBN 0691024235.

Assigned: "On the Physical Basis of Life."

#### **"On the Physical Basis of Life"**

(The page numbers referenced below are to be found in brackets in the e-text.)

1. On pages 131-45, what scientific argument does Huxley advance? Sketch the logical flow of his comments regarding "the physical basis of life" and his remarks about "protoplasm." What comparisons does he make between humans, plants, and animals to reinforce his argument?

2. On pages 145-53, Huxley shifts to another facet of his argument: “what is the ultimate fate, and what the origin, of the matter of life?” (145) What answers does he provide for these questions? How does Huxley’s reference to Balzac’s “Peau de Chagrin,” as well as his humorous remarks about mutton, enhance his response? Finally, what criticism does he make of “vitalistic” notions about life?
3. On pages 153 (bottom)—65, Huxley explores the philosophical context and implications of the scientific argument he has been making. How does he describe this philosophical dimension, and where does he stand on the ultimate significance of scientific explanations of life for philosophy and for the public? In particular, where does he stand on the issue of “materialism” as a basis for understanding life, and on “necessity” as an explanatory concept?
4. General question: how would you characterize Huxley’s performance as a public speaker, a rhetorician who in part uses literary means to persuade the public to accept his scientific claims about “the physical basis of life”? Do you find his rhetoric effective? Why or why not?
5. General question: there is still some lively debate in the first decade of the twenty-first century regarding the relative value of scientific and religious claims about the origin and significance of life. A number of authors, taken together, might be said to constitute something like a “new atheist” movement (Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and others). If you are familiar with any of these authors’ arguments, how do they compare with Huxley’s scientific rhetoric and position in the essay we have read? (Google-search any of the abovementioned authors’ names, and you should be able to find some excerpts from books and essays they have written.)

**Edition:** “On the Physical Basis of Life”

## RUDYARD KIPLING QUESTIONS

Assigned: Rudyard Kipling. From *War Stories and Poems*: “The Drums of the Fore and Aft” (7-38), “The Mutiny of the Mavericks” (70-88), “A Sahib’s War” (163-80), “The Comprehension of Private Copper” (183-93).

[The Kipling Society](#) offers a Reader’s Guide to many of Kipling’s stories and poems; the [Story List](#) offers links to notes on all four tales we are reading.

### “The Drums of the Fore and Aft” (7-38)

A very informative website on the Anglo-Afghan Wars (in which the British tried to counter Russian influence in the region and install amenable rulers) may be viewed at [Afghan Wars](#). On the Gurkha (Nepalese) troops who served alongside the British, see [Brigade of Gurkhas](#).

1. From 7-10, how does the narrator establish his authority and prepare readers to interpret the tale he is soon to tell about a regiment that breaks and then returns to the fight? (If you are presenting on this question, you might want to draw upon additional parts of the text to develop your response, or even incorporate question 6 regarding the text’s overall attitude towards the Afghan campaign and its participants.)

2. From 10-21, the narrator spends part of his time developing the story of Jakin and Lew. What do we learn about them—their backgrounds, their expectations on the eve of an engagement with the enemy in Afghanistan, and the way the adult military men look upon them?
3. From 21-29, how does the narrator characterize the Afghan fighters who oppose the British Imperial troops and the Gurkhas? What is related about their qualities and their methods of fighting? To what extent does the text rank them above or below the British and their allies?
4. From 29-38, why and in what manner does the “Fore and Fit” Regiment at first fail in its duty, and what are the consequences? What brings them around to the point where they acquit themselves well, and what exactly do they do to redeem themselves? What role, if any, might Jakin and Lew be said to play in this turnabout?
5. At various points in the story, we hear about the Gurkhas or Nepalese troops who fight alongside the British and against the Afghans. What qualities are ascribed to them as men and as warriors, and how do the British soldiers relate to these foreign but allied troops?
6. General question: taking into account the narrator’s characterization of the troops, the officers, the enemy, and the situation as a whole, what view of the imperial campaign in Afghanistan does the text present: positive, negative, or neutral and descriptive?

#### **“The Mutiny of the Mavericks” (70-88)**

7. From 70-74, what kind of organization is the IAA and what is said about certain of its members? What strategic objective do they apparently hope to achieve by means of inciting an Irish regiment in the Punjab to engage in a mutiny against the British? What sort of man is Mulcahy, whom they decide to send as the primary agent of their mission, and how does he set about to accomplish his designs?
8. From 74-80, how does the regiment respond to Mulcahy’s overtures and schemes? Why don’t they just turn him in—what’s in it for them to play along with his conspiratorial scheme, and how do they convince him that they are willing to revolt? What new event begins the process of Mulcahy’s downfall—what doesn’t he understand about these men, according to the narrator?
9. From 81-87, how do Horse Egan and Dan Grady decide to deal with the traitor in their midst? How does Mulcahy face his predicament, and what advantage do Grady and his comrades try to derive from the death of Mulcahy? What does the final section of the story suggest about the way the members of the Irish regiment regard their experience as soldiers in a difficult, hostile land? What’s the point of it all for them?

#### **“A Sahib’s War” (163-80)**

10. From 163-68, Umr Singh (a native of the Punjab in India) begins recounting to a fellow traveler an episode he has lived through during the Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902). Who was “Kurban Sahib,” and what relationship did Umr have with him? (Hint: see the inscription at the story’s end.) How does Kurban Sahib analyze the cause and progress of the Boer War? Why do they employ a devious method of getting to South Africa where the action is?

11. From 168-75, Umr, Kurban Sahib and a Muslim named Sikandar Khan are sent to the front managing the British army's horses, and end up involved in the fighting. In this narrative, much is said about racial and cultural differences. How does Umr regard the Africans he supervises, what relations subsist between the two men and the Muslim Sikandar, and how does Umr assess the "Ustrelyas" (Australians or New Zealanders) fighting alongside the English? How are the Boer opponents regarded?

12. From 175-80, Umr and Sikandar bury Kurban Sahib and are bent upon taking vengeance against the Boers (descendants of Dutch, German, Belgian and French settlers in South Africa) who killed him. How does this design play out—why don't they take vengeance? What are Umr's closing thoughts about where he stands now that the man he served is gone? What two "jests" give him pleasure at the story's end, and why?

### **"The Comprehension of Private Copper" (183-93)**

13. From 183-88, Private Alf Copper is taken prisoner by a young Transvaal burgher—a Boer partisan during the Boer War of 1899-1902. What is the burgher's story—his family and personal history? And what outlook on the history between the English and the South African Boers does he offer Alf Copper? What does the captor apparently think of the young Englishman he has taken captive, and why?

14. From 188-93, Copper turns the tables on his capturer. What is it about the burgher's attitude and behavior that makes this turnabout possible? Once he is himself a prisoner, how does Copper treat him and parse the way the young man behaved towards him when he had the upper hand? How is Copper different from what the burgher had thought of him?

15. From 188-93, what does the narrative suggest about the British side's understanding and morale with regard to the conflict in which they are engaged? Are they optimistic and perhaps even idealistic about what they are doing, or would some other way of characterizing them be best? Explain.

**Edition:** Kipling, Rudyard. *War Stories and Poems*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999. ISBN-13: 978-0192836861.

## **EDWARD LEAR QUESTIONS**

Assigned: "The Jumblies" (1528-29); "Cold are the Crabs" (7<sup>th</sup> edition).

### **"The Jumblies"**

1. What does a poem like this suggest to you about the way narrative works? (a set of statements or sentences that together make up a story.)

2. Compare Edward Lear's treatment of the way words mean to that of Lewis Carroll in "Jabberwocky" or "The Walrus and the Carpenter." What is similar and what is not?

### **"Cold are the Crabs" (7<sup>th</sup> edition only)**

3. I find this poem rather moving even though it is nonsensical—if I'm a typical reader, how might this poem be arousing my emotions and manipulating them?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

## DAVID LIVINGSTONE QUESTIONS (WR139 AT UC IRVINE)

### Ch. 18 from *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*

1. What is Livingstone's basic attitude towards the Africans he meets, and how does that attitude compare to that of a young Charles Darwin upon meeting the Fuegians?
2. How does Livingstone discuss the issue of race? How does his treatment of this subject compare to that of Thomas Carlyle in "Occasional Discourse"?
3. Why does Livingstone use phrases like "my children" when he refers to Africans?
4. In what way does the central event of Chapter 18—the tense standoff between Livingstone's party and the Africans who threaten them—reveal the complexity of the author's motives for exploring Africa?

**Edition:** [Project Gutenberg E-Text](#)

## CESARE LOMBROSO QUESTIONS (WR139 AT UC IRVINE)

### "Physical Anomalies of the Born Criminal" from *Criminal Man (L'Uomo Delinquente)*

1. What manner of treating lawbreakers does Lombroso's daughter (his editor) oppose? How, according to her, is criminal anthropology better than punishment?
2. What, according to Lombroso, is the fundamental assumption of the "modern science of jurisprudence"?
3. How does race figure in the selection we are reading? That is, what does race have to do with criminality, in Lombroso's scheme? Do you think modern criminology retains any traces of the kind of "scientific racism" or eugenics we can find in authors such as Lombroso? Or has that sort of thing been left behind pretty thoroughly? Explain your reasoning on this point.
4. How does Lombroso make connections between animals and people?

**Edition:** Lombroso, Cesare. *Criminal Man*. New York and London: G. P. Putnam, 1911.

## HENRY MAYHEW QUESTIONS

Assigned: Selections from Vols. 1, 4 from *London Labour and the London Poor* (1:1-4, 4:1-11).

### **From *London Labour and the London Poor*, Vols. 1, 4**

#### **Volume 1**

1. “[T]hose who have once adopted the savage and wandering mode of life, rarely abandon it” (2), says Mayhew in Volume 1. Describe what Mayhew says in our selections from Volume 1 in light of Gould’s terms “reification” and “ranking.”
2. According to Mayhew in Volume 1, “The nomadic races of England are of many distinct kinds—from the habitual vagrant—half-beggar, half-thief—sleeping in barns, tents, and casual wards—to the mechanic on tramp . . .” (2). Is there something jarring about Mayhew’s application of the word “race” in this passage?
3. Characterize Mayhew’s method of describing Street Folk in Volume 1 (3-4).
4. If you have ever read a Dickens novel, does Mayhew’s description of “The London Street Markets on a Saturday Night” (Volume 1, pp. 9-10) remind you of Dickens’ style? How so? If you are not familiar with Dickens, characterize Mayhew’s style in its own right. Is it realistic? Detailed? Artistic?

#### **Volume 4**

5. How does Mayhew, in Volume 4, explain the relationship between fact and theory, and between induction and deduction? Does he sound like a good Baconian inductive scientist, or does his methodology fall short in that regard? Explain.
6. How does Mayhew explain his intentions in cataloging the condition and kinds of the poor—what good does he hope might come of his efforts?

**Edition:** Mayhew, Henry. *London Labour and the London Poor*, Vols. 1, 4. New York: Dover, 1968. ISBN Vol. 1 0-486-21934-8, Vol. 4 0-486-21937-2.

## **JOHN STUART MILL QUESTIONS**

Assigned: “What is Poetry?” (1044-51); from *On Liberty* (1051-60); from *The Subjection of Women* (1060-70); from *Autobiography* (1070-77).

### **“What is Poetry?”**

1. On 1045, how does Mill, in his capacity as a young philosopher, defend his attempt to define poetry with some precision, rather than dismissing it as too popular or common a thing to bother with? What is the popular understanding of poetry’s essence, according to Mill, and why is it not sufficient?
2. On 1045-47, what distinction between narrative (“story”) and poetry does Mill develop? Which mode does he consider superior, and how does he justify his choice? To what sort of person does narrative appeal, and to what sort of person does poetry appeal? Do you find Mill’s arguments in this vein adequate? Why or why not?

3. On 1048-49, in analyzing the statements of Ebenezer Elliott and a writer for *Blackwood's Magazine*, what distinction does Mill make between poetry and eloquence? That is, how does poetry differ fundamentally from eloquence in a way that renders it superior? And why, according to Mill, is his conception of poetry's source and effect not weakened by the fact that most poets *publish* their work?
4. On 1049-51, how does Mill extend his key distinction between poetry and eloquence into a discussion of music and painting? What examples does he discuss? Which artists (and nations) does he prefer, and which does he hold in somewhat lower regard? To what extent does he show an appreciation for the power of eloquence, even if he prefers poetry?
5. General question: in your own words, what is Mill's fullest definition of poetry? To what extent do you find that it stems from and agrees with earlier "Romantic" definitions of poetry by Wordsworth, Shelley, Coleridge, or Keats?
6. General question: the major literary genres are poetry, drama, and fiction (novels, novellas, short stories). What distinctions do you find it most useful to maintain amongst the three, and why? Do you generally find it best to consider a work's genre as absolutely distinct and central to interpretation, or do you prefer to keep genre in the background when you think about a given work? Explain your rationale.

#### **From *On Liberty***

7. What ideas play a role in Mill's thinking on human nature? See, for example, his comments about von Humboldt (1051-52). What does Mill find so attractive about von Humboldt's views?
8. On 1053-57, on what principle does Mill praise "strong "impulses" and "individuality of desires"? Who or what, according to Mill, enforces his era's "hostile and dreaded censorship" (1054)? How does this censorship operate, and what are the worst effects of its influence?
9. On 1058-60, according to Mill, do "public opinion" and "the despotism of custom" retard strong individuals' pursuit of excellence? How does Mill use China's history (or his interpretation of it, at least) as an example of the dangers that stem from repressing the individual in favor of collective harmony?
10. Mill obviously believes English society should be geared towards individual self-development, not collective conformity. But who or what group will be the agent of change? Consider what he writes on 1058 about "those who stand on the higher eminences of thought." Who are these people, and how might they manage to bring about change?
11. General question: to what extent, and from what specific directions, do today's "strong individuals" face the kind of discouragement Mill laments in his own time? What collective entities and mindsets most influence us as individuals now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? Are those influences good, bad, or both? Explain.

#### **From *On the Subjection of Women***

12. On 1061-62, why is it wrong, according to Mill, to *naturalize* and codify the distinctions often made between people in terms of race, social class, and gender? What drives people to make those distinctions in the first place?

13. On 1063-64, why, according to Mill, is the subjection of women a special case in the oppression of one group by another? What do men want from women beyond simple obedience? How does this additional need affect men's treatment of them?

14. On 1064, why, in Mill's analysis, is the long-continued pattern of male-female relations unsustainable and morally wrong in modern (Victorian) British society?

15. On 1065-70, Mill returns to the question of the "natural" capacities of human beings. How does he refine and elaborate on his earlier argument against naturalizing or essentializing the supposed differences between men and women? How does he respond to the "logic" of men's insistence that women must be confined to the role of wife and mother, exposing its underlying prejudice?

### **From *Autobiography***

16. On 1070-71, how does Mill describe the depressive state into which he fell as a young man? What are its chief characteristics? In this state, what question arises within Mill's mind, and why does his answer to it deliver a profound shock to his early enthusiasm for social reform and deepen his personal anguish? What had he been expecting as his reward for helping others?

17. On 1072-73, what, according to Mill, was wrong with the principles underlying the utilitarian education given him by his Benthamist father James Mill? In particular, how did it misconstrue the value of emotion and misapply the basic principle of "association" that governs so much utilitarian thinking?

18. On 1074, how does Mill account for the positive effect that a reading of Marmontel's *Mémoires* had for him in the depths of depression? What is it about the particular segment he recounts that lightens his mood? What might be inferred from this episode in Marmontel as the thing that truly brings people together and leads them to happiness?

19. On 1074-75, how does Mill, after recovering from his breakdown, redefine his concept of the individual and rethink his understanding of what conduces to and sustains human happiness? How does his statement, "Ask yourself whether you are happy, and you cease to be so" encapsulate his argument?

20. On 1075, Mill says that he had always found much pleasure in listening to music, but that it didn't help him find his way out of the lowest point of his depression. What limitations does he ascribe to music as an emotional experience? Why, by implication, does he consider it somewhat less valuable than poetry as a means of regaining emotional health?

21. On 1076-77, what power does Mill ascribe to the lyric poetry of Wordsworth—how did it help him recover from his depressive episodes? What does Wordsworth's poetry do for him that Byron's poetry



couldn't, and what does Wordsworth seem to know about human nature that Jeremy Bentham and James Mill did not? Why doesn't it matter to Mill that—at least in his estimation—Wordsworth is by no means the greatest of England's poets?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

### Questions on Mill's Texts Not in the Norton Anthology

#### "What is Utilitarianism?" Ch. 2 from *Utilitarianism* (Edition Unknown)

4. What is utility, in the context of Mill's philosophy? Explain the Greatest Happiness Principle that governs so much Utilitarian thinking.
5. An early Utilitarian philosopher, Jeremy Bentham, said that "pushpin is as good as poetry." Does Mill appear to believe this, or does he say that some pleasures are better than others? If some pleasures are indeed better, how does Mill propose to make the necessary distinctions?
6. By what agency is the greatest happiness to be attained?

#### "Of the Ultimate Sanction of the Principle of Utility," Ch. 3 from *Utilitarianism* (Edition Unknown)

7. Is the "feeling" that one is a "social being" innate? Or is it merely a function of reflective reason?

## WILLIAM MORRIS QUESTIONS

Assigned: "The Defence of Guenevere" (1482-91); "How I Became a Socialist" (1491-94).

#### "The Defence of Guenevere"

1. What romance characteristics does this poem contain? In what sense might Morris, who is part of the nineteenth-century "medievalist revival," be distancing himself from naive acceptance of chivalric assumptions? (In necessary, look up the term "romance" in a good dictionary or a guide to literary terms.)
2. What case does Guenevere make in her favor? What does she admit or avow about her encounters with Sir Lancelot, and why does she nonetheless keep calling Sir Gawain (her main accuser) a liar? How do her remembrances of past thoughts and sensations help Guenevere defend her integrity?

#### "How I Became a Socialist"

3. On 1491-92, Morris writes that since he isn't a member of the working class, he came to socialism by means of an ideal. What is that ideal, and how does Morris contextualize the frame of mind ("group of mind," to use his term) that led him to formulate such an ideal?

4. On 1492-93, how does Morris describe the society that so easily contents the average “middle-class” British citizen? What accusations does Morris level against this status quo?
5. On 1493-94, what relationship does Morris assert should exist between art and more obviously practical affairs? Why should artistic representation and objects of art matter, in his view, when so many working people are without the necessities of life?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

Assigned: “The Haystack in the Floods” (1614-18, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. only).

### “The Haystack in the Floods”

1. How does the narration prepare us for the central act of violence near its end? Why does Godmar kill Robert? How exactly does Morris present the violent act of Godmar — would you describe his language as realistic? Explain.
2. Jehane the Frenchwoman is the most important character in this poem. How much insight do you find in the poem concerning her inner response to what she witnesses? Is Morris’ poem about psychological response, or does its emphasis lie elsewhere? Explain.

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 7th ed. Vol. 2B. New York: Norton, 2000. ISBN 0-393-97569-X.

### “Art and Socialism” (WR139 at UC Irvine)

1. Trace the similarities between Ruskin and Morris in the lecture “Art and Socialism.” It would be helpful to explain what Morris means by “Art.” Who should produce this “Art”?
2. Despite his respectful borrowing from Ruskin’s theories about art and useful labor, Morris departs from the master’s scheme. How do the views of labor and class put forth by Morris differ from Ruskin’s ideas on the same subjects?
3. Trace the presence of Marx in “Art and Socialism.” What directly Marxist ideas and expectations does Morris bring to his audience?
4. Do you think that Morris has successfully blended Ruskin and Marx, thus making Marx more acceptable to a British audience? Or does Morris’ emphasis on “Art,” however widely defined, somewhat muddy his own socialism?

**Edition:** Trilling, Lionel and Harold Bloom. *Victorian Prose and Poetry*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1973. ISBN 0195016165.

## JOHN HENRY NEWMAN QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *The Idea of a University* (1035-42).

**From *The Idea of a University***

1. What are the two kinds of knowledge, as Newman defines and elaborates upon them? What is the difference between the object of or goal toward which each kind of knowledge tends? When, according to Newman, does it become appropriate to say that knowledge is “Science or Philosophy”? (1121-22)
2. How does Newman deal with the argument that utilitarian education and the useful knowledge it promotes at least achieve their stated goals, while liberal education is much more difficult to deal with in those terms? Why, according, to Newman, is liberal education ultimately more “useful” than narrower, more immediately practical training? (1123-26)
3. Do you think that scientific endeavor could meet Newman’s criteria for a liberal education? What argument might a person make in favor of including it in a liberal curriculum? Suggestion: look up the word “science” in a dictionary containing etymologies and older meanings (the *OED*, for example); in what sense does Newman draw upon the word’s etymology and more archaic range of meanings?
4. What does your university’s catalog say about the goals of education here? Do you believe that the school promotes the achievement of those goals? Do you think most students see themselves as engaged in the educational project described in your school’s catalog? What barriers to a truly “Newmanesque” education do you find at work in your own experience here? (General question)
5. Does Newman’s argument depend upon the nineteenth century’s tendency to split science and liberal arts or humanities into two completely separate camps? Does his argument reinforce that split, or does he try with some success to lessen it? Explain your reasoning on this point.

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

**In the 7<sup>th</sup> Edition Only**

Assigned: from *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1128-35); from *Liberalism* (1135-37).

**From *Apologia Pro Vita Sua***

5. How is Newman’s autobiographical narrative a response to what has been called a “crisis of authority” in Victorian times? (General question.)
6. In describing the development of his religious convictions up through 1833, Newman says he was influenced by various factors. What were some of those factors? What effect did they have upon him? (1128-32)
7. Newman explains his reaction to the 1830 Revolution in France and the Reform agitation going on in Britain during and after that period. What was Newman’s stance on the issue of reform? How does he

say his reaction contributed to the development of his views on reforming the Anglican Church? (1132-34)

8. How would you compare Carlyle's stance on the principal of spirituality with Newman's? Even though Newman is a firm believer and Carlyle is a doubter, do they share some common opinions and writerly strategies? (General question)

**From "Liberalism"**

9. What precise definition does Newman provide for the term "liberalism"? What does his definition imply about his view of the relationship between faith and "thought"?

10. Does Newman's way of defining and opposing liberalism in church matters contradict his views on the great value of "liberal education"? Why or why not?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 7th ed. Vol. 2B. New York: Norton, 2000. ISBN 0-393-97569-X.

**In the Mermin/Tucker Anthology**

Assigned: from *The Idea of a University* (231-39); from *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (239-56).

**From *The Idea of a University***

1. What relationship does Newman say on page 231-32 should subsist among the various "sciences" or branches of study, and what benefit comes from study at a university arranged to maintain that relationship?

2. How on page 233 does Newman use Cicero's claims to oppose Bacon's claims about the benefits of scientific endeavor? Why might he go back to an ancient author to undermine the claims of a more modern one?

3. What are the two kinds of knowledge, as Newman defines and elaborates upon them from 233-35? What is the difference between the object of or goal toward which each kind of knowledge tends?

4. When, according to Newman on page 235, does it become appropriate to say that knowledge is "Science or Philosophy"? When does knowledge cease to be deserving of that name?

5. How, on page 235-36, does Newman define "knowledge" and "education"?

6. How, from 237-39, does Newman deal with the argument that utilitarian education and the useful knowledge it promotes at least achieve their stated goal, while liberal education supposedly fails to achieve its goal? What is the "object" of liberal education, and why is that object or goal appropriate to our mental powers or to our "nature," as Newman characterizes it?

7. Do you think that scientific endeavor could meet Newman's criteria for a liberal education? What argument might a person make in favor of including it in a liberal curriculum?

8. What does Chapman University's catalog say about the goals of education here? Do you believe that the school truly promotes the achievement of those goals? Do you think that most students see themselves as engaged in something like the educational project described in Chapman U's catalog?

**From *Apologia Pro Vita Sua***

9. How is Newman's autobiographical narrative a response to what has been called a "crisis of authority" in Victorian times?

10. In describing the development of his religious convictions up through 1833, Newman says he was influenced by various factors. What were some of those factors? What effect did they have upon him?

11. From 245-246, Newman explains his reaction to the 1830 Revolution in France and the Reform agitation going on in Britain during and after that period. What was Newman's stance on the issue of reform? How does he say his reaction contributed to the development of his views on reforming the Anglican Church?

12. By 1839, what made Newman begin to doubt the validity of the Anglican "middle" strategy between Protestantism and Catholicism? See pages 249-50.

13. How, according to Newman, does the Catholic tradition he finally accepted in 1845 avoid the charge of hypocrisy in affirming doctrines like Transubstantiation even though they cannot be proven by strict logic? What legitimizes assent to such claims? See pages 251-52.

14. How, according to Newman on page 252-53, is the Catholic Church an answer to the world's infliction upon the individual consciousness that human history is "a profound mystery... absolutely beyond human solution"?

15. How, from 254-56, does Newman defend the Catholic Church on the issue of intellectual freedom? Why is the Church's claim to make authoritative pronouncements about spiritual matters not a violation of the individual believer's intellectual liberty?

16. How would you compare Carlyle's stance on the principal of spirituality with Newman's? Even though Newman is a firm believer and Carlyle is a doubter, do they share some common opinions and writerly strategies?

**Edition:** Mermin, Dorothy and Herbert Tucker. *Victorian Literature: 1830-1900*. Heinle & Heinle / Harcourt, 2001-02. ISBN 0155071777.

## MAX NORDAU QUESTIONS

Assigned: "Fin de Siècle" (1-44) from *Degeneration*.

### **“Fin de Siècle” from *Degeneration***

1. Define Nordau’s term “degenerate.” Who are Nordau’s true degenerates? What are the physical and intellectual symptoms of an individual degenerate? What seems to be his notion of healthy or “non-degenerate” humanity?
2. Catalog the cultural signs, or stigmata, of degeneracy: how, according to the Herr Doktor, do Europe’s *fin de siècle* art, music, fashion, and literature encapsulate and worsen its downward slide?
3. What reason (etiology) does Nordau give for Western Europe’s advancing degeneracy? Have you come across similar arguments in more modern contexts? If so, briefly discuss them.
4. In what way does Nordau’s theory build upon and broaden Cesare Lombroso’s in *Criminal Man*?

**Edition:** Nordau, Max. *Degeneration*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska Press, 1993. ISBN 0803283679.

## **WALTER PATER QUESTIONS**

Assigned: “Preface,” “*La Gioconda*” passage from “Leonardo da Vinci,” and “Conclusion” to *The Renaissance* (1507-13).

### **“Preface” to *The Renaissance***

1. On 1507-10, what must critics do first, according to Pater, before they can hope to achieve their aims? What exactly are those aims: what is the aesthetic critic’s responsibility to the work of art and to the audience?
2. On 1507-10, what similarities and differences do you find between Pater’s statements about the “the aim of true criticism” and Matthew Arnold’s remarks in “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” (1384-97)?
3. On 1509-10, how does Pater describe the Italian Renaissance? What characterized that period and movement? Moreover, to what extent (and why) does Pater expand the usual boundaries historians might set for a term such as “the Renaissance”?

### **From “Leonardo da Vinci” in *The Renaissance***

4. In the first few pages of the e-text selection, how does Pater prepare readers for his explanation of Leonardo’s genius as a painter: that is, how does he describe Leonardo’s background and his personality as a youth, as well as his early experiences in connection with the renowned artist Verrocchio?
5. To what extent does Pater, in describing Leonardo’s famous portrait of Mona Lisa ([“La Gioconda”](#)), achieve “the aim of true criticism” that he sets forth in his Preface? Matthew Arnold said that the

critic's task should be "to see the object as in itself it really is." As you understand Pater's effort, what is he aiming to do here?

### "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance*

6. On 1511-12, how do the first three paragraphs of the Conclusion describe the "tendency of modern thought"? What examples of that tendency does Pater set forth, and in what order? What rhetorical aim does the order in which he offers them seem designed to achieve?
7. On 1512-13, how does Pater characterize the purpose of philosophy, define "success in life," and then elaborate on that definition and its implications for those who want to live as fully as possible? What does he suggest about the value of art in this quest, and about art's relationship to other areas of life?
8. On 1511-13, consider Pater's style—he says in the Preface that a critic must distill the "active virtue" operative across a large section of a given author's work. To the limited extent possible given the present selection, apply that rule to Pater: what is the active virtue at work in the Conclusion, and how do specific features of Pater's style enhance his message?
9. General Question: When Pater first published *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* in 1873, some thought the Conclusion scandalous, and Pater withdrew it in at least one of several subsequent editions. Why might this aesthetic peroration have been considered morally dangerous by some Victorian readers? What sort of audience do you think might find Pater's aesthetic program appealing?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9. See also excerpts from *The Renaissance* Ch. 6, [\(E-Text excerpts from "Leonardo da Vinci."\)](#)

Assigned: "Style" from *Appreciations*.

### "Style" from *Appreciations*

10. On 1645-47 (Norton 7<sup>th</sup> ed.), Pater argues that while there is of course sense in differentiating poetry from prose, the distinction is by no means absolute. What does he apparently mean by his phrase "the imaginative sense of fact" that marks both good poetry and good prose, whether fiction or non-fiction?
11. On 1647-48 (Norton 7<sup>th</sup> ed.), Pater makes his case that "imaginative prose" best corresponds to the needs of a contemporary readership. What reasons does he give for thinking as he does? How does a comparison between music and the literary arts help him advance his argument?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 7th ed. Vol. 2B. New York: Norton, 2000. ISBN 0-393-97569-X.

[Appreciations](#) is also available in PDF format at *The Victorian Prose Archive*.

## COVENTRY PATMORE QUESTIONS

Assigned: from "The Angel in the House" (1586-87).

### From "The Angel in the House"

1. "The Angel in the House" encapsulates the official mid-Victorian view concerning the nature and proper role of women. On the basis of the selection from Patmore's poem, explain this view of feminine nature and status.
2. From lines 21-36, Patmore uses the rhetorical device called *aporia*; he says that woman—or, more particularly, his own specimen of the female gender—possesses virtues that are simply beyond his power to describe. What, then, does the speaker feel competent to relate about her?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

## CHRISTINA ROSSETTI QUESTIONS

Assigned: "Song—She sat and sang alway" (1460-61); "Song—When I am dead, my dearest" (1461); "After Death" (1461); "Dead before Death" (1462); "Cobwebs" (1462); "A Triad" (1462-63); "In an Artist's Studio" (1463); "A Birthday" (1463); "An Apple Gathering" (1464); "Winter My Secret" (1464-65); "Uphill" (1465); "Goblin Market" (1466-78); "No Thank You, John" (1478); "Promises Like Pie-Crusts" (1479); "In Progress" (1479); "A Life's Parallels" (1480); "Sonnet 17" (1480); "Cardinal Newman" (1480-81); "Sleeping at Last" (1481).

### "Song (I): She Sat and Sang Alway"

1. What is the value of memory and hope in this poem? What changes have they wrought, if any, in this poem's speaker? From what force has the speaker been released?
2. How is this poem concerned with the limitations of expression? How are the speaker's emotions resolved or dealt with, if they in fact are dealt with?

### "Song (II): "When I am Dead, My Dearest"

3. What is the point of the speaker's projecting consciousness beyond death?
4. How are remembrance and forgetting similar in their effect?
5. Is Nature present in this poem? If so, what role does it play?

### "After Death"



6. What perspective does this poem afford the speaker? In what sense does the speaker gain release from forces restricting her?

**“Dead before Death”**

7. What situation does this poem describe—what is “dying,” and what has been lost already?

**“Cobwebs”**

8. What is the “land neither night nor day”? Is nature mimetic of the speaker’s state of mind? Explain.

**“A Triad”**

9. How does this poem explore love as a central aim of life, and yet as a prime source of frustration? What is responsible for the frustration?

10. What kinds of love does the poem deal with? In what sense is the poem about the “love” that inheres to different kinds of relationships?

**“In an Artist’s Studio”**

11. What reflections does this poem make about the way Pre-Raphaelite art represents women?

12. How is the woman referred to in Christina Rossetti’s poem transformed from her ordinary self, and to what end?

**“A Birthday”**

13. What relationship does the poem posit between love and birthdays? How, that is, can love come to one “like a birthday”?

14. What is the relationship between the first stanza (with its similes) and the second stanza?

15. Christina Rossetti’s poetry often deals with the transfigurative effects of a moment—how is this poem a good example of that concern?

**“An Apple Gathering”**

16. How is an apple gathering a metaphor of something larger—namely a relationship? What does the poem imply about the staying power of love?

**“Winter My Secret”**

17. What is the benefit to be gained from keeping a secret? How does the speaker treat the imagined addressee in this poem?

18. What purpose do the references to the seasons serve?

19. How is this poem about expression and concealment? What sorts of expression are alluded to?

**“Uphill”**

20. What journey does this poem refer to? What is the speaker’s attitude towards the journey?

21. The poem takes a question-and-answer format. In what way do the questions change? In what way do the responses change? Explain.

**“Goblin Market”**

22. How does this poem remind you of a Grimm’s fairy tale?

23. How much of the action and “world” of this poem seems deliberately vague? Where are the girls’ parents? How old are Lizzie and Laura? What is the season? Where does the action occur?

24. How does Laura buy the fruit, and why does she pine away?

25. What is the relationship between Laura and Lizzie?

26. How are expression and repression related in this poem? What cures Laura? What restraint must both girls eventually accept?

**“No Thank You, John”**

27. How does this poem construct an unattractively “male” perspective on male/female relations, and how does the female speaker counter that perspective?

28. How does this poem differentiate between friendship and love?

**“Promises Like Pie-Crusts”**

29. How are promises like pie-crusts?

30. What is the connection in this poem between friendship and freedom of expression? How does Rossetti imply that intimate relationships restrict such expression?

**“In Progress”**

31. What has changed in the speaker? Why does she expect some kind of transfiguring event to happen?

**“A Life’s Parallels”**

32. How does this poem deal with the potential powers of memory? This is a subject we were concerned with in our discussions of romantic poetry, so it would be worthwhile to make some connections between romantic emphasis on memory and Rossetti’s interest in it.

33. How does this poem explore the need to make sense of one's life? What does it say about the problem of desire?

**From *Later Life***

34. What does the speaker reveal, and what does she conceal? What is her "lot," as she describes it?

35. In what sense is this poem concerned (as "Life's Parallels" is) with the need to draw upon memory and render one's own life intelligible?

36. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar write about Christina Rossetti's "aesthetics of deferral and renunciation." How does this late poem comment on that approach to poetry and, more broadly, to the restrictive life situations her poems often explore?

**"Cardinal Newman"**

37. To what extent does Christina Rossetti (or the speaker) identify with the passionate way Cardinal Newman lived his life?

**"Sleeping at Last"**

38. Compare this poem to earlier poems in which Christina Rossetti concerns herself with the subject of death. What has changed about her perspective?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

## DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI QUESTIONS

Assigned: "The Blessed Damozel" (1443-47); from *The House of Life* (1457-59).

**"The Blessed Damozel"**

1. Why do the mortal lover's words appear in parentheses? How does he speak of the distance between the Damozel and himself? How does he represent her understanding of her temporal and spatial separation from him?

2. What relationship does the poem posit, in its presentation of the Damozel, between spirit and body, and between mysticism and eroticism?

3. What devices or strategies does the speaker employ to help us visualize the Damozel and interpret her words and actions? For example, where is the Damozel exactly, and how is she clothed — what is the significance of objects such as "stars," "lilies," etc.? What role does nature imagery play in this poem?

**From *The House of Life***

**"The Sonnet"**

4. How does this poem deal with the traditional theme of achieving immortality through verse?

**"Nuptial Sleep"**

5. Why might this poem offend a Victorian reader's morals? What situation does it describe?

**"Silent Noon"**

6. In what way is this poem "synaesthetic"? What is unusual about Rossetti's powers of description in this poem?

7. How might the poem's description of nature be called "Keatsian," if you are familiar with poems in which Keats describes natural settings?

**"Soul's Beauty" and "Body's Beauty"**

8. How do the powers of Beauty differ in these two poems?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

**From the 7<sup>th</sup> Edition**

**"A Superscription"**

1. What is this poem's subject? Who is speaking, and who is being addressed?

**"The One Hope"**

2. What is the One Hope, and what good does it do?

3. Contrast the way "Hope" is described with the way the poem represents or images forth "Peace."

"The Woodspurge" (1579-80).

**"The Woodspurge"**

4. What is the speaker's state of mind during this lyric poem?

5. What insight are we to understand the speaker to have gained when he says simply that the Woodspurge "hath a cup of three"?

6. Does this poem's treatment of nature seem "romantic" to you, or does it differ? Explain.

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 7th ed. Vol. 2B. New York: Norton, 2000. ISBN 0-393-97569-X.

## JOHN RUSKIN QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *Modern Painters* (1320-24), "The Nature of Gothic" from *The Stones of Venice* (1325-34) and *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century* (1443-51).

### **From *Modern Painters***

1. On 1320-21 ("Greatness in Art"), how does Ruskin define "great art"? What are its characteristics, and what effect should it have on an audience?
2. On 1321-22 ("The Slave Ship"), how does Ruskin's description of Turner's painting "The Slave Ship" illustrate his definition of greatness in art? Moreover, characterize Ruskin's style in his description of "The Slave Ship." How appropriate is the description to the painting?
3. On 1323-24 (Of the Pathetic Fallacy"), what is the "pathetic fallacy"? According to Ruskin, what perspective about poetic language do readers risk losing when a poet commits that fallacy?

### **"The Nature of Gothic" from *The Stones of Venice***

4. On 1326-27, what are the three kinds of architectural ornament (1434)? How do those three kinds of ornament encapsulate Ruskin's moral interpretation of history?
5. On 1327-30, how does Ruskin explain the spiritual advantages of the Gothic (medieval, Christian, or "constitutional") style of ornament? What rationale does he provide for largely rejecting the modern capitalist principle of "the division of labor"?
6. On 1330-32, what responsibility, according to Ruskin, does the Victorian consumer bear towards workers? How, in other words, does the consumer fit into Ruskin's moral framework, his scheme for improving life for British workers? How does his contrast between machine-made glass beads and hand-made Venetian glass help him drive home his argument about the value of labor?
7. On 1332-33, what analysis does Ruskin offer concerning British labor and class divisions? To what extent is his thinking in this regard similar to Carlyle's in *Past and Present*?
8. On 1333-34, what rationale does Ruskin give for favoring "imperfection" in the products of labor over "perfection"? What role does his mention of the foxglove blossom play in his argument?
9. General question: economists in Ruskin's own day and in more recent times have sometimes said that the great Victorian sage was naïve when he tried to suffuse capitalist market practices with moral concerns and even "correctness." They have a point since in a market society, powerful incentives govern both production and consumption. How much control, in your view, can consumers individually and collectively exercise over what gets produced and how it gets produced and distributed? Can we make a moral difference, or do you think the "amorality" of the market is so strong that it's hard to imagine conscientious people bringing about any real change for the better?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

Assigned: "The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century" (1443-51).

### "The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century"

10. What are the physical characteristics of the "plague-wind," and what effects does it have on the weather more generally?

11. Why can't the phenomenon Ruskin describes be measured scientifically? Why does he choose to present his findings in the form of progressive journal entries surrounded by present commentary? How do the entries capture the effects of the plague-wind on the author's psyche?

12. Ruskin is one of many prominent Victorian writers (Carlyle among them) who eventually lost his religious faith. What value, then, does the Christian interpretive framework continue to hold for Ruskin in "Storm-Cloud" In what sense, that is, does the plague-wind amount to a moral phenomenon?

**Edition:** "The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century" ([E-Text](#)).

### Selection from Trilling/Bloom's *Victorian Prose and Poetry Anthology*

#### "The Roots of Honour" from *Unto This Last*

Assigned: "The Roots of Honour" from *Unto This Last* (189-200).

1. In what way does Ruskin criticize "political economy" and its ideas about human inter-action, or, more specifically, about the relationship between employer and worker?

2. How does Ruskin propose to handle employment and wage-payment? Why?

3. What are the "five great intellectual professions"? What are their respective tasks, and what is the task of all of them combined?

**Edition:** Trilling, Lionel and Harold Bloom. *Victorian Prose and Poetry*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1973. ISBN 0195016165.

## GEORGE BERNARD SHAW QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Pygmalion*. (Separate text.)

### Act 1

1. What tensions already show in the relations between the Mother (later named as Mrs. Eynsford Hill), the Daughter (later named as Clara), and the son, Freddy?

2. Shaw's Preface indicates enthusiasm for phonetics, but what "dark side" might we infer from the opening scene in which everyone misconstrues Henry Higgins' motives for taking down Eliza the Flower Girl's speech?

3. What coincidences in the first act seem likely to structure the rest of the play?

### **Act 2**

4. Why does Eliza want to improve her speaking skills and lose her accent? What does she expect to gain?

5. What concerns do Colonel Pickering and Mrs. Pearce (Higgins' housekeeper) raise about Higgins' scheme to educate Eliza? How does he respond to their concerns?

6. How does Higgins treat Eliza and her desire for education? Discuss a few instances—what assumptions does he make about her, and why do you think he makes them?

7. How would you sum up the creed of Eliza's father, the dustman Alfred Doolittle? What does he have against "middle-class morality," and why?

### **Act 3**

8. Shaw offers rather full stage descriptions and directions and includes a long explanation about Henry Higgins' personality. What do you think he is up to by all the references to William Morris decorations? And why provide an account of a character's personality when, in most plays at least, we get a sense of that from the events and dialogue of the play?

9. How does Clara take Eliza's incredible attempt to "talk proper" during an accidental meeting with the Hills at Mrs. Higgins' "at home" social occasion? How do Freddy and Mrs. Eynsford Hill interpret Eliza's performance?

10. What do you think of Higgins' relationship with his mother, as it is developed in this third act? And how does she view her son's scientific experiment with Eliza?

11. What do you think of Higgins' attitude towards his experiment with Eliza, up to this point in the play? What does he reveal towards the end of the third act?

### **Act 4**

12. In the 1930's film production we plan to watch, we actually see Eliza dazzle the audience at a big party, and pass herself off as royalty. In the play, we don't see her performance. What difference does the change make, if any?

13. What does Higgins say he has accomplished when Eliza succeeds? What does Pickering apparently think has been accomplished?

14. Why is Eliza so distraught at after the party? What cogent criticism of Higgins and his ideas about class and language does she offer in this fourth act?

### Act 5

15. Higgins boasted earlier in the play that he would be able to transform Eliza's very being and make her anything he wanted. Judging from this fifth act, would you say he was right or wrong? Is Eliza still the "Eliza" we met at the beginning, or is she another person altogether? Explain.

16. How does Alfred Doolittle's transformation into a married gentleman reflect on the exploration of class and linguistic variety we find in *Pygmalion* as a whole? What lesson are we supposed to learn from what happens to him?

### Sequel

17. Before reading the sequel that follows Act 5, see if you can guess what Shaw is going to spin out as a future for some of the characters. Set down your guesses as a response. Then check to see if he agrees with you.

18. General questions: Shaw says in his Preface before Act 1 that good art is always didactic. What is the ultimate "lesson" he probably wanted us to take away from *Pygmalion*?

19. Do you agree with Shaw that art should be didactic (i.e. that it should drive home some moral point, take a stand on current issues, etc.)? In your response, don't ignore the other side of the question—consider argument/s against didacticism and argument/s in favor of it.

**Edition:** Shaw, George Bernard. *Pygmalion*. Dover, 1994. ISBN 0486282228.

Assigned: *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1746-92).

### *Mrs. Warren's Profession*

#### Act 1

1. How much does Mr. Praed appear to know about Mrs. Warren's profession? How would you characterize his class and moral sensibilities as opposed to, say, those of Mr. Crofts or the young Frank Gardner?

2. The first act introduces us at length to Vivie, the 22-year-old daughter of Mrs. Kitty Warren. What kind of life has the young woman lived so far? How much does she know about her mother's past and current circumstances, and what is the state of their present relationship?

#### Act 2

3. Frank's father is the Anglican Reverend Samuel Gardner. In Act 1, he tried to play the role of wise guardian to his son. Why did he fail? And why, in the second act, is he so opposed to his son Frank marrying Vivie?



4. Vivie demands to know about her mother's past, and learns more than she bargained for. How does Kitty Warren explain the way she entered her profession, and what justification does she offer for having done so? How does Vivie react?

### Act 3

5. What seems to be Frank's motive in wanting to marry Vivie? Does he love her? Frank and Vivie represent the younger generation in *fin-de-siècle* Britain. Do you find that they differ from their elders in any meaningful way? Explain.

6. While trying to convince Vivie to marry him, Sir George Crofts tells Vivie much about his relationship to Mrs. Warren. First of all, what is Sir George's argument in favor of his suit for Vivie's hand? Secondly, what exactly is his relationship to Mrs. Warren, and why does this information upset Vivie?

### Act 4

7. Vivie has decided to work in the legal profession with Honoria Fraser in Chancery Lane, and scorns her mother's pleas for understanding. Vivie's advancing awareness of her circumstances and of her mother's plight make her a candidate for the role of heroine in Shaw's play. But how does her final confrontation with her mother frustrate this expectation, or at least complicate it?

8. Shaw said that Mrs. Warren is the only thoroughly conventional character in the play. While defending her continuation in the profession of prostitution (she is currently the successful part-owner of brothels on the Continent), what "conventional" commercial and social or moral values does she assert?

9. A general question for the play: Shaw didn't like his plays to be labeled "didactic." He always said that he wasn't preaching morality directly to his audience. But the play we have studied obviously engages with serious social and ethical issues. If it isn't strictly didactic, how do you account for its intellectual and emotional impact as you have experienced it?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

## ELAINE SHOWALTER *DAUGHTERS OF DECADENCE* QUESTIONS

Assigned: From *Daughters of Decadence*. (Showalter, Elaine, ed.) Ada Levenson's "Suggestion" (38-46), George Egerton's "A Cross Line" (47-68), Olive Schreiner's "The Buddhist Priest's Wife" (84-97), Charlotte Mew's "A White Night" (118-38), Sarah Grand's "The Undefinable: a Fantasia" (262-87).

### Ada Levenson's "Suggestion" (1895; Showalter 38-46)

1. Ada Levenson was one of Oscar Wilde's best friends, but how does this short story (published in Vol. 5 of *The Yellow Book* in 1895, during Wilde's trials) gently parody Wildean aestheticism? What

characteristics, utterances, and actions mark Cecil as an aesthete? To what extent does the text portray him sympathetically?

2. What does the story tell us about Cecil Carington's father? What kind of life does he seem to have lived—how does he rate as a Victorian patriarch or paterfamilias? How does his marriage to young Laura Egerton come about? What role did Cecil and his sister Marjorie play in bringing them together, and why did they want to do that?

3. How does the text represent the female characters, in particular Laura but also Marjorie and the widow Mrs. Winthrop? What is their relationship to Cecil? To what extent do Laura and Marjorie share his aesthetic sensibilities and attitudes?

4. Not much happens in this story, if by "happens" we mean dramatic material events. But it isn't exactly "a story about nothing." What, then, are the main issues and acts of interest here? One thing to consider is Cecil's dilemma with regard to his father, Laura, and Adrian—what is that dilemma, and how does Cecil deal with it?

**George Egerton's "A Cross Line" (1893; Showalter 47-68)**

5. On 47-50, how does the married protagonist of the story meet the man who becomes her lover? How do they initially regard each other? In particular, what seems to be the man's motive in striking up an acquaintance with her? How does the initial meeting go—who appears to have the upper hand, and why?

6. On 50-57, how does the text describe the protagonist's relationship with her husband? How well do they understand each other? What does she explain to him about a woman's supposed need for open expression of love? Does he seem to understand this explanation or accept it? Explain.

7. On 57-65, the protagonist reflects on her own desires and has an intense conversation with her lover. How does she "represent herself to herself"—what situations does she imagine herself in, and what do they reveal about her? And how does she explain the supposed thoughts and feelings of women in general—to what extent does her view differ from the male ideal of womanhood that she also references?

8. On 57-65, how does the protagonist's lover regard the state of his relationship with her as it seems about to end? What has he apparently been expecting from her? What offer does he make, and what request? How does she respond to him?

9. On 65-68, in this last section of the story, the protagonist realizes that she is pregnant. What effect does this development have on her—what are her priorities and thoughts, and what resolution does she take regarding the affair she has had? What role does Lizzie the maid play in this section? (If you are presenting on this question, consider, too, how the story's end affects its overall exploration of gender relations and of women's supposed tendencies or nature.)

**Olive Schreiner's "The Buddhist Priest's Wife" (1891-92, Showalter 84-97)**

10. What relationship is posited between the man and the woman in this story? What plan does she lay out for her future, and how does her male friend interpret this plan? What does he, in turn, want his own future to be like, and what does she think of his views in that regard?
11. To what extent does the way the woman she lives before her departure promote her stated ideal of achieving equality between the sexes? On what basis does she think it is possible to achieve such parity? On pages 91-93 in particular, how does she describe the similarities and differences between men and women, and how do her thoughts on that matter relate to the issue of gender equality?
12. How do you interpret the enframing device of the story, whereby the narrative begins and ends with reflections on the body of the female protagonist? What relation do those reflections have to the main part of the story, in which the protagonist and her male friend discuss marriage, gender differences, and equality?

**Charlotte Mew's "A White Night" (1903, Showalter 118-38)**

13. Where is the story set? What role does the architectural description play in the development and resolution of the story? How, that is, does it establish atmosphere, affect the thoughts and feelings of the main characters, and contribute to the unfolding events?
14. The narrator repeats what she has heard from Cameron about his strange adventure of 1876 in Spain. How does Cameron explain his reaction to the event that he describes, and most particularly to its final horror? How—and how intelligibly or plausibly—does he raise and deal with the issue of his own complicity as witness to a live burial?
15. It seems reasonable to interpret this story not simply as an account of a bizarre clash between the civilized and the primitive but as an exploration of an unsettlingly "gendered" event and an equally gendered way of processing or interpreting it. Leaving aside Cameron's perspective, how do you interpret what happens to the woman at the hand of monks in a cloister?

**Sarah Grand's "The Undefinable: a Fantasia" (1908, Showalter 262-87)**

16. What is the painter's perspective on his art at the beginning of the story? What influences have led him to this view, and what seems to be his relationship to his art before Martha (his new model, or rather guest) rings his doorbell?
17. At what points in the story does it become apparent that the painter is beginning to undergo a transformation in attitude and perception that might lead him to regain his creative spark? How is the change described in terms of his interactions with Martha?

18. Who is the model Martha, insofar as the story tells us? What clues are given regarding her identity and her special qualities? What hints of a feminist interpretive framework do Martha's comments to the painter open up?

19. By the end of the story, what turns out to be Martha's fullest revelation of her value to the painter as he attempts to regain his creativity? How does she embody the proper subject of painting, and what does she teach the painter about the source of great art? Does he seem to take the full measure of what she has taught him, or is he unable to accept it? Explain.

**Edition:** Showalter, Elaine, ed. *Daughters of Decadence: Women Writers of the Fin de Siècle*. Rutgers UP, 1993. ISBN-13: 978-0813520186.

## HERBERT SPENCER QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *First Principles* (307-11, 382-85, 403-05, 432-35).

### From *First Principles*

1. From pages 307-11, Spencer provides a narrative of human society's evolution from what he calls "the homogeneous" to "the heterogeneous." Describe the stages in this evolution.
2. Regarding pages 382-385, what does Spencer claim is the "key to social inequalities" and to industrial differentiation into workman and master? What is the general law that supposedly accounts for such inequalities?
3. As for pages 403-05, explain how Spencer uses the term "heterogeneity" or its variants in the service of the European races.
4. From pages 432-35, Spencer uses the term "segregation" to naturalize the idea of societally constructed differences between people in both mental makeup and occupation. Thanks to his training and to "the law of direction of motion," the coal miner follows "the line of least resistance" right down into the mines where he is to slave away at his natural occupation. Ask yourself, "if laws like this are responsible for everything, how could Spencer criticize even the worst brutalities of the Industrial Revolution?"
5. "Equilibration" is Spencer's key word in the section spanning pages 458-61. Explain what Spencer is trying to accomplish with his use of this concept. Why might it be central to his outlook as a cultural theorist?
6. A general question: what is Spencer's worst error in method as a social scientist? Is he a good inductionist?

**Edition:** Spencer, Herbert. *First Principles*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976. ISBN 0837177561.

## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON QUESTIONS

Assigned: *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1645-85).

### *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

1. What effect does the sight of Mr. Hyde have upon Enfield and Utterson? Early in the story (1645-50), how do they describe him and the effect he has upon them?
2. Describe the Carew murder that occurs on pages 1655-57. In what circumstances does it occur? How does Hyde behave, and what is the victim's class status?
3. Find places in the story where the issue of class or social status either openly or subtly influences the characters' actions, treatment of one another, or the advice they give.
4. What kind of character is Dr. Jekyll when we are first introduced to him? In what sense does he appear to be a model or admirable character? But is he a flawed character, too? How?
5. Compare Dr. Jekyll with Mr. Hyde. What are the physical and mental differences between them? Are they in some way allied or even ultimately one being? If so, how?
6. In what sense might the Victorian period's rigid moral standards be responsible for Dr. Jekyll's tragic transformation into the evil Hyde? In other words, according to Stevenson's story, what makes a man like Jekyll—a good Victorian, really—become the criminal Hyde?
7. By what specific mechanism does Dr. Jekyll transform himself into Mr. Hyde?
8. In an earlier short story called "Markheim" (1874) Stevenson wrote that "evil consists not in action but in character." How is that statement applicable to the various characters' interest in discovering the facts behind "the strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"?
9. What happens to Dr. Lanyon as a result of his contact with Jekyll and Hyde, and what story does he write down before his death (1671-75)?
10. Examine the final chapter, "Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case" (1675-85). How does Jekyll tell his story—how does he account for his scientific motivations, his evil actions, his need for secrecy? How does he characterize his ultimate fate and his relation to Mr. Hyde?
11. What effect on you as a reader does the book's partly epistolary structure have? (The term "epistolary" refers to the writing of letters.) In other words, we sometimes read a chapter that describes events or their consequences, and then, in a subsequent chapter, the person most directly concerned in those events tells his story by means of a letter read by us and several other characters.

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

## ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE QUESTIONS

Assigned: "Hymn to Proserpine" (1496-98), "Ave Atque Vale" (1500-05).

**“Hymn to Proserpine”**

1. Why do you suppose Swinburne employs such an unusual verse form and rhythm — what psychological effects does he seem to be aiming at? What state of mind does such verse convey? Describe the style’s effects on your own consciousness.
2. Characterize Swinburne’s language in terms of the opposition spirit/matter, or symbolic/literal.
3. Who is Proserpine, and why does the speaker pray to her?
4. What is the speaker’s attitude towards Christianity? Is the new Christian faith the real enemy in this poem, or is something else responsible for the defeat of the pagan world view and religion?
5. What consolation does the speaker draw from the formerly powerful pagan gods, or from some other source?

**“Ave Atque Vale”**

6. How is this poem “stoic” in tone? What consolation, if any, does the speaker offer to Baudelaire and to those grieving over his death?
7. What relationship, if any, is posited between the living and the dead in this poem? What attitude, that is, should the living take up towards the dead, and, at least by conjecture, *vice versa*?
8. How does Swinburne convey a sense of what matters about Baudelaire’s poetry? How, for example, does Swinburne’s nature imagery seem “Baudelairean,” if you have read some of that French author’s work?
9. What role do the speaker’s references to Classical religion play in this elegy? How do they create a bond between the speaker and the departed Baudelaire?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

**ALFRED TENNYSON QUESTIONS**

Assigned: “Mariana” (1112-14); “The Lady of Shalott” (1114-18); “The Lotos-Eaters” (1119-23); “Ulysses” (1123-25); “Tithonus” (1125-26); “Tears, Idle Tears” (1135-36); and *In Memoriam A.H.H.* (1138-88)—read at least the following: Prologue, 1-5, 7, 11, 14-15, 28, 34, 39, 54-56, 75, 108, 118, 123-24, 126, 130-31, Epilogue; “The Charge of the Light Brigade” (1188-89); “Crossing the Bar” (1211-12).

**“Mariana”**

1. What is the relationship between Mariana’s state of mind and the natural setting? Is it mimetic or disjunctive—i.e. out of sync with the external surroundings? Explain.

2. How is this poem concerned with an attempt to transfigure ordinary reality? How do Mariana's thoughts and desires, as the poem gives them to us, amount to such an attempt?

### **"The Lady of Shalott"**

3. What effect do the poem's rhyme scheme, meter, and presentation of imagery have on the themes it pursues? How do these elements help move the plot forward?

4. This poem employs metaphors of weaving, singing, and reflection (the "mirror" and "shadows")—what significance do those metaphors have in establishing the poem's meaning?

5. How does the poem's descriptive quality change when Sir Lancelot enters the scene? How is his appearance connected with what the Lady has called a "curse"? Why does the sight of Lancelot induce her to leave her loom and "look down to Camelot" (110)?

6. How do the Lady's death and the villagers' perceptions of her raise the issue of art's relation to life? What statement, if any, do you think the poem as a whole makes about that relation? Why, for example, must the Lady die "singing in her song" (152)—why is it impossible that she should arrive safely at her destination?

### **"The Lotos-Eaters"**

7. Characterize the nature description of the poem's first five stanzas. What effect does the natural setting have upon Odysseus' men?

8. Where is Odysseus in this poem? What is his relation to his crew? If you have studied Homer's *Odyssey*, how stands Odysseus in relation to his crew in that work?

9. The first several stanzas are written in the Spenserian stanza, which you may recall from *The Faerie Queene*. Why is that an appropriate choice in conveying the poem's initial atmosphere and the men's attitude before the Choric Song begins?

10. In the "Choric Song," what lesson or sentiment do the Mariners draw from their situation within the poem's natural setting? What is their primary complaint?

11. What view of the gods do the Mariners set forth? How does that view differ from the ones that you have found in any studies you have made of ancient Greek texts?

12. Consider the back-and-forth structure of argument (or complaint) and resolution in "the Choric Song." What allows the Mariners to arrive at their resolutions? What role does memory play?

13. Consider the Mariners' concluding tone and rhetoric in Section 8. How is their hexameter-couplet rhetoric both powerful and yet a misuse of language within the context of Greek heroism? What, in other words, has happened to the bond between speech, sensory perception, and action?

### **“Ulysses”**

14. What is the basic situation when the poem begins? At what point in his career does Ulysses (i.e. Odysseus, hero of Homer’s *Odyssey*) find himself, and in what state of mind is he?
15. What is Ulysses’ attitude towards his son Telemachus and towards the domestic realm that the young man will be left to tend? How does Ulysses understand his own people?
16. At what point does Ulysses begin addressing his old crew members rather than addressing himself in thought? How does his internal commentary on his past experiences and current state of mind differ from the rhetoric he aims at the crew?
17. To what extent is Tennyson’s Ulysses like Homer’s Odysseus? How does he differ from the Greek hero in Homer’s epic?
18. How indebted is Tennyson’s construction of Ulysses to Dante’s treatment of the epic hero in Canto 26 of *Inferno*? How does Dante cast Ulysses—what was the epic hero’s sin? Is that sin something we need to consider in understanding Ulysses in Tennyson’s poem?

### **“Tithonus”**

19. How does Tithonus’ view of experience and desire contrast with that of Ulysses? Why does Tithonus’ attitude towards these things differ?
20. What is Tithonus still able to respond to? What is he unable to respond to?
21. How does Tithonus understand his relation to the gods? Do you find that understanding similar to the ancient Greeks’ views on the matter? Explain.

### **“Tears, Idle Tears”**

22. Why are there single quotation marks at the beginning of each stanza? What effect do those marks have on your understanding of the poem? What is the speaker trying to do by means of his words in “Tears, Idle Tears”?
23. How does this poem show what Jonathan Culler and others have noted as the Victorians’ preference for analogy over direct metaphor? What effect does Tennyson’s consistent employment of similes have upon your understanding of the poem?
24. How does Tennyson’s reference to memory in this poem compare to the role that memory plays in Wordsworth’s poetics and in his great odes?
25. How does the speaker’s response to his emotions contrast with that of Tithonus?

### ***In Memoriam A.H.H.* “Prologue”**



26. This poem was added late in the composing stages as an affirmation of Tennyson's religious faith. What do you think of the quality or steadfastness of Tennyson's affirmation?

27. What relationship between faith and knowledge does the speaker posit?

28. How does this Prologue recast or sum up the whole of *In Memoriam A.H.H.*? In other words, how does the speaker characterize the poetry he has been writing and editing for around 17 years?

### Lyric 1

29. Why does Love need to "clasp" Grief? (9) What's the penalty if Love does not do so? What is the central problem set forth by this lyric?

### Lyric 2

30. How is the yew tree correlated with the speaker's state of mind? Why does the speaker envy the yew tree—what qualities or "perspective" (to personify the tree for a moment) does the tree have that he lacks?

### Lyric 3

31. What do Sorrow and the speaker argue about? Why does it make sense for the speaker to treat Sorrow momentarily as an external force with whom he can converse?

### Lyric 4

32. What role does sleep play in the psychology of sorrow?

### Lyric 5

33. What does this lyric argue or explore about the relationship between words and grief? How does the poem question romantic notions about the powers of expressive language?

34. How does the speaker's exploration of expressive theory affect your relationship as a reader to *In Memoriam A.H.H.*?

### Lyric 7

35. How does the speaker's state of mind color the description he provides?

### Lyric 11

36. How does the speaker's own calmness compare to the natural calm he describes? How does natural calm compare to Arthur Hallam's calmness in death?

37. How does this poem amount to the speaker's preparation for accepting his friend's death, insofar as such acceptance is possible?

**Lyric 14**

38. How does this poem set forth the importance of coming to terms with the material fact of death, as one might say Lyric 11 does as well?

**Lyric 15**

39. How does the natural setting correlate with the speaker's state of mind?

40. Review the reference to molten glass in *Job* 37:18 and *Revelations* 15:2. What do these biblical passages add to your understanding of the poem?

**Lyric 28**

41. How can you connect this lyric to the importance of memory in Wordsworth's poetics, as we gather from "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*?

42. What associations do the church bells bring back to the speaker? Why are those memories important to the speaker's process of grieving?

**Lyric 30**

43. What allows the speaker to look forward to the day? What does his ability to greet the morning signify with regard to his emotional progress?

**Lyric 34**

44. What alternative reason for writing poetry does the speaker set forth as a possibility in this lyric? Does he accept that possibility or reject it? What advantages would accrue to him if he were to become a "wild poet"?

**Lyric 39**

45. How does "Sorrow" function as a Victorian censor of romantic expression in this lyric?

**Lyric 54**

46. What is the speaker saying about poetry's power to render the world morally or intellectually intelligible? Examine the final stanza with this question in view.

**Lyric 55**

47. How might you tie this lyric to Wordsworth's comments about science in "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*? The central question here is "what kind of knowledge does science give us, and how does that knowledge affect our emotional wellbeing?"

#### Lyric 56

48. Why would it be worse for humans than for animals if Nature's self-description should turn out to be true? What effect does the answer given in the last stanza have upon the emotional movement of *In Memoriam* as a whole (as you gather from our selections)?

#### Lyric 75

49. How does this lyric compare to Shakespeare's handling of the theme of "poetic immortality" in his *Sonnets*?

#### Lyric 108

50. How does the speaker characterize his attitude towards Arthur Hallam? What feeling is he exploring in this lyric?

#### Lyric 118

51. What two kinds of "evolution" does this lyric explore? What seems to be the speaker's attitude towards early formulations about evolution—for instance Charles Lyell's theory of uniformitarianism in the 1830's text *Elements of Geology*? (Uniformitarianism is the theory that posits the steady, long-term application of natural forces as an explanation for earth's transformations as we see them reflected in geological features?)

52. Where does the speaker's conception of God come into play in this poem, if at all?

#### Lyric 123

53. What attitude towards scientific knowledge does the speaker take in this lyric? What is the speaker's "dream," as he calls it in the final stanza? Why can't he accept the perpetual change that he has just described in the first two stanzas?

#### Lyric 124

54. What does the poem set forth as evidence that God exists? What kinds of evidence fail to convince him of God's existence?

55. What is the relationship or similarity between faith and doubt as this lyric handles those states?

56. Relate this poem's ending to Carlyle's doctrine of humankind's need for "mystery." Is Tennyson's solution to religious doubt Carlylean, or more conventionally Christian?

### Lyric 126

57. What are the “court” and the “faithful guard” in this lyric? From what is the speaker being protected while he is in the court?

### Lyric 130

58. To what extent is this lyric a nature poem? What progress does it mark in the speaker’s state of mind as he grieves for Arthur Hallam?

### Lyric 131

59. Comment on the way Tennyson describes human life as a process, a “flow.” What is the thematic value of the metaphor of water employed in this lyric?

### Epilogue

60. How does Tennyson connect his sister’s wedding with the passing of his friend Arthur Hallam? What do the two events have in common?

61. Do you find this selection from the final part of *In Memoriam* convincing? In other words, do you believe that Tennyson has come full circle in his process of grieving and accepted Arthur Hallam’s death as part of God’s providence? Has he dealt finally with the religious doubts that arose partly his from his response to Arthur’s passing?

### “The Charge of the Light Brigade”

62. What is the function of this poem? What ideal of heroism does the poem set forth? Do you find it convincing? Why or why not?

### “Crossing the Bar”

63. How does the treatment of death in Tennyson’s farewell poem compare to his treatment of the same event in other poems? How does he want to go out of the world? With what hopes does he bid the world farewell?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

### “The Eagle” (7<sup>th</sup> edition only)

64. How does this poem recall Keats’ statements about the need for a poet to cultivate “negative capability”? What is negative capability, and to what extent does Tennyson achieve it in this poem?

65. At what point might the poet’s descriptive powers be said to fail? How does Tennyson deal with this moment?

### “The Eagle” – Fragment

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls. (1851)

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 7th ed. Vol. 2B. New York: Norton, 2000. ISBN 0-393-97569-X.

### J. J. THOMAS QUESTIONS (WR139 AT UC IRVINE)

Assigned: “Introduction” to *Froudacity*.

#### “Introduction” to *Froudacity*

1. List some basic criticisms Thomas makes of Froude the historian’s powers of observation and objectivity. What does Froude get wrong when he observes non-British cultures?
2. How does Thomas establish his own authority as an historian and as a critic of Froude? How does Thomas apparently view his relation to the tradition of English historians?
3. What seems to be the Thomas’ general motivation for undermining Froude’s book on the West Indies—what kind of erroneous ideas about culture, race, and historical process does Froude propagate, according to Thomas?

**Edition:** Thomas, J. J. *Froudacity; West Indian fables by James Anthony Froude, explained by J. J. Thomas*. London: T. F. Unwin, 1889.

## OSCAR WILDE QUESTIONS

Assigned: *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895-1902).

### *The Importance of Being Earnest*

#### Act I

1. Why do Jack and Algernon need Ernest and Bunbury, respectively: how do these alter-egos differ from the characters who invented them, and what purpose do they serve? What occasion leads Jack and Ernest to reveal to each other the deception they are practicing by means of their alternate identities?

2. Describe Gwendolen's sensibilities: what seems to be important to her? Why does she want to marry an "Ernest" — where did that desire come from? What does it suggest about Gwendolen and about the circle of society in which she moves?
3. In any comedy of manners, the female characters' status bears examination. What is Cecily Cardew's position with respect to Jack? And with regard to Gwendolen, what are Lady Bracknell's requirements for any suitor who seeks her hand — what kind of a man does she believe would be appropriate for Gwendolen?
4. Consider the account Jack offers Lady Bracknell regarding his lineage and upbringing. Aside from just being worth a laugh, what is the thematic significance of Jack's having been discovered in an ordinary handbag lost in a railroad-car cloakroom? For example, how does it relate to the play's broader concerns with "names," good birth, respectability, and so forth?
5. While bantering with Algernon, Jack claims that he is tired of living in a society of wits. But sharp, clever exchanges are the lifeblood of comedy of manners: assess the nature of the "wittiness" in the exchanges between Algernon, Jack, and other characters. What social, political, sexual or other matters serve as the subjects of the characters' witty remarks, and what attitudes and sensibilities underlie those remarks?

## Act II

6. The play's setting has now switched to the countryside. What are the similarities and differences between town and country in *The Importance of Being Earnest*? Is there a legitimate opposition between them? If you're familiar with other instances of the genre (some Shakespearian comedies, for example, or C18 Restoration comedies, or, amongst the Victorians, Boucicault or Bulwer-Lytton), is Wilde's handling of the town/country split typical or unusual? Explain.
7. What characterizes the outlook of Miss Prism, the aging governess? How, for example, does she regard Cecily — what concern for the girl and her education does she show? And how does her courtship with Canon Chasuble compare with the other courtships in the play?
8. Just as Gwendolen does, Cecily has a striking way of falling in love. How did she fall in love with "Ernest" and then develop the affair? What does this manner of proceeding (along with some of her other comments about sundry matters) suggest about Cecily's outlook and the manner in which she has grown up?
9. How does Algernon (i.e. "Ernest") react to the news that he has been in a passionate relationship with a woman he's never actually met and that he is quite "wicked"? How does he manage his stay in the countryside so as to maximize his own advantages and cause the greatest possible inconvenience for Jack?
10. How do Gwendolen and Cecily get along when they first meet? What confusion soon sets in, and how does their regard for each other change at that point? How does their temporary dislike for each

other get expressed? Does their treatment of each other differ from the way Algernon and Jack treat each other? Explain.

11. What is the state of affairs towards the end of the second act? How are Algernon and Jack's deceptions uncovered, and what is the result? How do they respond to the dire straits they find themselves in as suitors to Gwendolen and Cecily?

### Act III

12. Jack, Gwendolen, Algernon and Cecily patch up their differences easily, but new troubles arise when Lady Bracknell arrives: what obstacle does she pose to Jack? And how does she at first regard Cecily when she finds out that her nephew Algernon intends to marry the girl? What changes her mind, and what contradictions have by now come to light concerning Lady Bracknell's views on respectability?

13. Describe the stalemate that occurs when Jack asserts his guardianship over Cecily. What revelation does Miss Prism (whose name is recognized by Lady Bracknell) grudgingly make? How does it help to resolve the stalemate and allow the comedy to conclude with the promise of happy marriages all around?

14. The play ends with Jack realizing "the vital Importance of Being Earnest." Now that we know Jack was always Ernest, what lesson has been imparted about this Victorian keyword? Moreover, what other Victorian virtues has this popular 1895 play been sending up throughout? How would you formulate the basic critique of late Victorianism Wilde's play might be said to constitute?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

Assigned: *Lady Windermere's Fan*.

### *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892)

#### Act I

12. What are Lady Windermere's values, and from whom does she say she inherited them? And what kind of ethical system does Lord Darlington, Lady Windermere's admirer, subscribe to? Do the two converse on equal terms?

13. How does the Duchess of Berwick describe marital relations, and what advice does she offer Lady Windermere about how to rein in Lord Windermere, whom everyone thinks is having an affair with the racy Mrs. Erlynne? In what sense is the Duchess a representative character?

14. By the end of the first act, what are the respective aims of Lord and Lady Windermere? What is she upset about? What is he determined to do for Mrs. Erlynne?

15. How does wit function in the first act (and in subsequent acts)? To what extent does it encapsulate the conventions of upper-class British life? Does it uphold those conventions, mock them, or both?

## Act II

16. What arguments does Lord Darlington use to convince Lady Windermere to run away with him?

17. What effect does Mrs. Erlynne have on the company at Lady Windermere's evening party? What sort of personality does Wilde give her, and what transformation does Mrs. Erlynne undergo in the second act?

## Act III

18. How do conventional class-based assumptions about propriety and "good and evil" structure the third act? What role does sentiment (as opposed to wit and intrigue) play in the proceedings between Mrs. Erlynne and Lady Windermere?

19. How is Lady Windermere's fan more than just a plot device? (It will appear again in the fourth act.) If you have read *Othello*, how does the fan compare to Desdemona's handkerchief—another telltale object of affection?

## Act IV

20. How does Mrs. Erlynne collect her reward for the good turn she has done Lady Windermere? By the play's end, who understands her story, and who does not?

21. What "moral" has Lady Windermere learned by the end of the play concerning the nature of good and bad? Has Lord Windermere learned as much as Lady Windermere?

22. The traditional structure of comedy is as follows: protasis (setting forth of plot elements and main characters); epitasis (complication of the plot); catastasis (false or incomplete climax); and catastrophe (climax). Where do you find these four structural points in *Lady Windermere's Fan*?

**Edition:** Wilde, Oscar. *Lady Windermere's Fan*. Dover, 1998. ISBN 0486400786.

Assigned: *Salome: A Tragedy in One Act*.

## *Salome: A Tragedy in One Act*

23. What is the affinity between Salome and the moon?

24. What view of love does the play set forth?

25. How do other characters besides Salome regard Iokanaan? Whose perspective do you consider most accurate or significant, and why?

26. Why doesn't Herod want to grant Salome her wish?



27. Can this play be properly interpreted within a moral framework, or is it wrong to say that Salome has “sinned”? Explain.

**Edition:** Wilde, Oscar. *Salome: A Tragedy in One Act*. Dover, 1997. ISBN 0486218309.

Assigned: from “The Critic as Artist” (1689-97).

### From “The Critic as Artist”

1. On 1689-91, why, according to Gilbert, is the artist superior to other people?
2. On 1692-95, how does Gilbert delineate the “highest Criticism” (1693 top)? Why is the critic superior even to the artist? What can a critic do for the work, according to Gilbert on 1694-95?
3. What is the difference between impressionism in art or criticism and the kind of expressive theory we find in, say, Wordsworth? Why does Gilbert (1693-94) reject romantic expressivism in favor of his own impressionist doctrine?
4. What distinctions does Gilbert make on 1696-97 between the literary and the plastic arts and music? How does he re-evaluate Pater’s claim that “all art aspires to the condition of music”?
5. In your own view, what is the critic’s relation to the work of art? Does the art or literary critic have a responsibility to carry out the Arnoldian task of “see[ing] the object as in itself it really is”? (Gilbert discusses this issue on 1696-97.)
6. In another theoretical essay, “The Decay of Lying,” Wilde insists that art (which he aligns with “lying” – spinning stories and creating beautiful images to serve as forms for the imagination) is superior to everyday life. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

**Edition:** Abrams, M. H. et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. E. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN Package 2 (Vols. DEF) 0-393-92834-9.

Assigned: Oscar Wilde. “The Decay of Lying” ([E-Text](#)).

### “The Decay of Lying”

1. On 35-36, what does Vivian have against nature? What does he insist nature lacks – why isn’t it the great source of moral intelligibility and renewer of human community that the Romantic poets claimed it was?
2. On 36, what criticism does Vivian make of politicians? Why are their lies so unsuccessful? And by contrast, what exactly constitutes a “a fine lie”? Why is such an excellent lie a good thing, in Vivian’s outlook?
3. On 39, why, according to Vivian, is the realism of the French novelist Émile Zola a failure? And on 43, on what grounds does Vivian further accuse realism of failure?

4. On 39-40, what are “masks,” and why, according to Vivian, do they lead to more interesting discoveries about people than anything we could learn from them in their ordinary, everyday, undisguised capacity?
5. On 41, Vivian argues that “The only beautiful things, as somebody once said, are the things that do not concern us.” To what extent do you think Wilde, in this essay, follows Matthew Arnold’s doctrine of “disinterestedness” in matters of art and criticism?
6. On 45-46, what version of human society’s origins does Vivian set forth—in what way did the first genuine liar serve as a founder of civilization? How does he define “decadence,” and how does his definition differ from the commonly accepted social narrative attached to such a term?
7. On 47, Vivian says that “life imitates art far more than art imitates life.” How does he go on to explain the purpose of art? What critical doctrine is he rejecting here? Moreover, how does he characterize the power of imagination, and how does art serve imagination?
8. On 50, how does Vivian define “the basis of life”? How does he enlist Aristotle’s *Poetics* to make his case about the centrality of imagination to human happiness? Is his enlistment of Aristotle based on an accurate reading of the ancient philosopher’s ideas? Why or why not?
9. On 51 to the essay’s conclusion, Vivian insists on the autonomy or independence of art as a realm distinct from the ordinary concerns of life. Why is it important to him that art be considered a realm all its own, separate from other kinds of endeavor? What power attaches to art precisely because it “never expresses anything but itself” and “rejects the burden of the human spirit” (51)?
10. General question: to what extent does Wilde agree with Walter Pater on key issues such as the value of expression and art’s autonomy? Does Wilde differ from Pater on any significant issue or in his general approach to the relation between art and the individual, art and life?
11. General question: what advantages does Wilde’s use of a Socratic form of dialog confer upon his essay in making the case that lying is a vital element of human society and that the demand for “truth-telling” is vulgar and misguided?

**Edition:** Wilde, Oscar. “The Decay of Lying” ([E-Text](#)). For a hard-copy edition, refer to Richard Ellmann’s *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*. Chicago, U of Chicago Press, 1982. 290-320.

Assigned: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

*The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Chapter One

1. The first chapter sets the stage for the coming struggle between artist Basil Hallward and decadent aristocrat Lord Henry Wotton over young Dorian Gray. Characterize the two older men. What seem to be their principles and lifestyles?
2. What might Basil mean when he says he won't exhibit his portrait of Dorian because he has "put too much of... {himself} in it"? (24) In other words, what does Basil the painter claim that art should be or do, and why does he appear to consider Dorian a threat to this claim?
3. Lord Henry (or "Harry") has some curious views on marriage and on the masses. What are those views? Does Lord Henry make a few good points about these issues?
4. Does Harry's philosophy remind you of Walter Pater's ideas in "Conclusion"? How?

### **Chapter Two**

5. Basil introduces Lord Harry to Dorian. Consider this chapter as a seduction scene. To what would Harry win over Dorian? What are his arguments? Which one is most effective?
6. What effect do Harry's arguments have upon Dorian? Describe the Faustian bargain he makes.
7. Whom has Dorian chosen to spend his time with by the end of the chapter?

### **Chapter Three**

8. Examine the master/disciple relationship that is becoming established between Dorian and Lord Henry. What seems to be the reward of this relationship for Henry? Again, does he sound like Pater the scientific analyst of emotions and impressions?

### **Chapter Four**

9. Dorian describes to Harry how, inspired by Harry's Paterian rhetoric, he wandered eastward in London in search of new sensations, was talked into entering an "absurd little theatre" (75), and got his first look at Sibyl Vane. In what play and role is Sibyl cast? Why might the choice of plays on Wilde's part be important?
10. How does Dorian respond to Sibyl's performance? Examine his behavior upon being introduced to Sibyl. Does he recognize her as another human being?
11. Examine Lord Henry's enjoyment as he watches Dorian experience his first love.

### **Chapter Five**

12. Does Sibyl understand her relationship with Dorian in a mature way? Does she see him for what he is?
13. What does Sibyl's brother James, aged sixteen, appear to have against Dorian, whom he has never met? To explore this question, you must pay attention to the secret that James' mother reveals to him

about his birth. Based upon what you already know about Dorian's birth, might there be some still deeper reason for James' presentiments about Dorian Gray? Do the two young men actually have something in common?

14. Describe the Vane family in terms of class. Does the family have a stable relation to either the upper or the lower, or even the middle, class? Which family member has the best sense of this position?

### **Chapter Six**

15. On page 101, Lord Henry makes some interesting observations on male-female relations and on marriage. On the whole, Henry is no great supporter of marriage, but nonetheless, he seems to think that Dorian's proposed marriage might just open up new opportunities. How so?

16. What does Dorian say or imply made him fall in love with Sibyl? Is it really Sibyl that he loves? Or does he love Juliet?

17. Under the spell of actress Sibyl, Dorian's opinion of the refined Epicurean Henry appears to have changed, at least for now. How has Dorian redefined pleasure, and what might Lord Henry find disagreeable about Dorian's new definition?

18. Nonetheless, when the chapter ends with a carriage ride to the theater where Sibyl is to perform, Dorian rides with Lord Henry, not with Basil Hallward. Is that a disturbing portent with regard to Dorian's intentions toward Sibyl?

19. Have you noticed something about Basil's character in the course of reading this chapter? In what way does he take issue with Lord Henry's amoral sparring with Dorian? Also, why does Basil brood silently at chapter's end?

### **Chapter Seven**

20. Why does Sibyl perform badly?

21. Why does Dorian reject her afterwards? What do his reasons tell us about him?

22. What has happened to Dorian's portrait when he returns home? What does he resolve to do?

### **Chapter Eight**

23. No sooner has the ink dried on the contrite letter Dorian has written to Sibyl than Lord Henry shows up with the news that she has committed suicide. Follow out Henry's attempts to turn Dorian away from grief and remorse? With what arguments does he pursue his goal?

24. Is Henry successful? Examine Dorian's resolve when, as the chapter ends, he returns to his chamber to contemplate his portrait.

### **Chapter Nine**

25. Basil Hallward, crestfallen to hear of Sibyl's death, visits his friend. How does Dorian receive Hallward's sincere condolences? Does Dorian sound a lot like Lord Henry by now?

26. What confession does Basil make to Dorian about the portrait and about his former attitude toward Dorian himself? How does Dorian take this confession?

### **Chapter Ten**

27. Why does Dorian believe it is necessary to hid his portrait? Does he hide the picture only because of what others may find out, or is there an additional reason?

28. Lord Henry has given Dorian a curious yellow book. What sort of book does it appear to be? By what means does it affect Dorian?

### **Chapter Eleven**

29. In this long chapter, whole years go by, and yet Dorian does not age a day even though he is leading a vicious life. Harry-like, he becomes a spectator; but in this instance, the spectator beholds his own corruption. Since we know that Lord Harry is a Paterian, trace out as many Paterisms as you can in this chapter.

30. To what use is Dorian putting the Oxford Professor's philosophy, at least as he understands it? Notice the scientific trappings of Dorian's methodology. To what behavior, however, does this badly applied science lead him? (Pay special attention to the part of the chapter in which Dorian fetishizes gems, books, and other objects.)

### **Chapter Twelve**

31. Basil Hallward shows up at Dorian's doorstep and reports, horrified, all the nasty rumors that have been circulating about his young friend. It may be true, as Lord Henry says somewhere, that "the only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about," but nonetheless, catalog the rumors about Dorian—just what has he been up to all these years?

32. What is Dorian's response to Basil's litany of decadent acts and to his attempts to change his friend's ways?

### **Chapter Thirteen**

33. Dorian shows Basil the portrait he painted some eighteen years ago. How does Basil respond to what he sees?

34. Examine the narrative that Dorian gives of his own fall. Is it convincing?

35. In response to Basil's frantic, priestly attempt to make his friend confess and repent, Dorian murders him. How does Dorian treat this terrible act?

### **Chapter Fourteen**

36. Who is Alan Campbell? Why has Dorian sent for him? Can you connect Alan's grotesque scientific task to Dorian's understanding of the Paterian method.

### **Chapter Fifteen**

37. This is a rather uneventful chapter. Dorian and Lord Henry dine at Lady Narborough's place. Try comparing the impression the two men make. Compared to what we know about Dorian, does Henry seem almost innocuous next to him?

### **Chapter Sixteen**

38. What does Dorian say at the chapter's beginning that he needs most to do? How does he plan to do it?

39. Pay attention to the people Dorian has ruined—Adrian Singleton and the prostitute—and, in a sense, James Vane? What has he done to them? What is his relationship to and attitude toward them now?

40. James Vane, who has apparently had his mind set for years on punishing Dorian for Sibyl's death, nearly catches him. What is the clue that at first sets him after his enemy? More importantly, why doesn't James recognize Dorian? Does the answer go deeper than mere age?

### **Chapter Seventeen**

41. Well, another dinner-party chapter is upon us. It must have been terribly difficult for Wilde to write—after all, writing about people doing nothing is the most exhausting task of all—except for doing nothing. Can you make something, by now, of Lord Harry's remark, "Our countrymen never recognize a description"? (232) Or how about Dorian's Henryesque remark that women are "Sphinxes without secrets"? (232)

42. Why does Dorian faint at chapter's end? Describe the opposition between the setting of this chapter and the appearance of James Vane on the scene.

### **Chapter Eighteen**

43. James Vane, spying on Dorian at the hunting grounds, is fatally shot. Characterize the reaction of the hunters, including Harry, in terms of class relations.

44. What is Dorian's reaction when he examines the dead man's body and realizes that it is James? Does Dorian's own fear of death's coming in any way link him to James?

### **Chapter Nineteen**

45. Lord Henry is getting a divorce, Alan Campbell has committed suicide, and everyone thinks that Basil is missing in Paris. Dorian wants to reform his ways, and has even decided that he won't ruin the reputation of Hetty, the country girl he has been seeing. What is Lord Henry's reaction to this new sensation on Dorian's part?

46. How serious is Dorian about reforming? Does Henry find it easy to win him back to the status of a Paterian art object? What arguments does Henry use?

### Chapter Twenty

47. What is the significance of Dorian's breaking of the mirror given him long ago by Lord Henry?

48. Examine Dorian's thinking process as he makes his fatal decision. What does he hope to accomplish by stabbing his own portrait?

**Edition:** Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Ed. Donald L. Lawler. New York: Norton, 1988. ISBN 0-393-95568-0. The questions would work as well for the new second edition, edited by Michael Gillespie. ISBN 0-393-92754-7.