

## Take-Home Essay Questions for Exam One

Choose one of the following questions and write an essay in answer that is at least 1,500 words (about 5 pages). You should use your anthology and *Aurora Floyd* for quotations and other supporting material, but do not use any other outside sources. Your essay must be in MLA format. Be sure to put the number of the question you are answering below your name on the first page of your essay.

- 1) In our discussions of gender in the Victorian period, we have returned repeatedly to the idea that masculinity and femininity are mutually dependent. Choose one author and explore the ways in which she/he establishes the differences and interconnections between these two gender constructions.
  
- 2) When Victorians highlight the problems with Industrialization, they almost inevitably seek to define what it means to be human, as well as the nature of genius (i.e. the pinnacle of humanity), in order to make a contrast between England's past and present. Choose two works and compare and contrast the different ways the nature of humanity may be used in this rhetorical move. Be sure to define what the author means humanity, and the bucolic past and industrial present.
  
- 3) In discussions of women's position in marriage, many Victorians used the metaphor of slavery in order to describe the extent to which women were oppressed within this social institution. Choose two works and compare and contrast the different ways in which this metaphor is used to advocate for the reform of women's position in marriage, as well as their larger place within Victorian society.
  
- 4) Compare and contrast how Elizabeth Barrett Browning and George Eliot reconcile their positions as women writers within their works. Namely, how do these two women who both defined themselves as conventional nineteenth-century women work out the contradictions between that role and the role of the author. Be sure to reference specific poems or essays. Also, you must define the conventional roles of the author and the middle-class woman at some point in your answer.
  
- 5) Many of the writers we have read spend a great deal of time considering the current unhealthy state of Victorian society and arguing for a particular way of curing those social ills to make England healthy and strong once again. Choose two authors and compare and contrast both their critiques and plans for improvements.
  
- 6) Constructions of gender played a large part in the ways in which the Industrial Revolution affected Victorian England. Choose either femininity or masculinity and discuss how two different works connect gender and industrialization. You must, of course, define how each author constructs the gender identity you are focusing on, as well as what that particular author means by industrialization. In addition, be sure to pay attention how class differences inflect the construction of gender you are writing about.