Høgskolen i Telemark

Avdeling for allmenne fag

EKSAMEN

I

409. British Romanticism
Engelsk mellomfag

30. NOVEMBER 2001

Tid:	09.00 – 15.00
Målform:	Engelsk
Sidetal:	6 (medrekna forsida)
Hjelpemiddel:	Godkjend engelsk-engelsk ordbok
Merknader:	Svar på EI av oppgåvene Answer ONE question
Vedlegg:	Tekst

Answer ONE of the questions:

1. The cult of the individual is frequently regarded as a typical feature of Romanticism. Give a brief description of this phenomenon in the general context of the period, and then discuss the role of the poet in particular, using as a point of departure the following three texts: William Wordsworth's 'Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, 1802', Percy B. Shelley's 'A Defence of Poetry', and Shelley's poem 'Ode to the West Wind'. You will find extracts from the prose texts and the entire poem on pp. 3—6.

2. Discuss the question of class and social mobility in Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), and how these issues can be related to the cultural and political context of the period in which it was written. You may find the following names useful:
- Mr and Mrs Bennet; Jane, Elizabeth, Kitty, Mary and Lydia
- Sir William and Lady Lucas; Charlotte Lucas
- Mr Bingley, Caroline Bingley
- Mr Darcy, Georgiana Darcy
- Mr Wickham, Mr Collins, Mr and Mrs Gardiner, Lady Catherine de Bourgh
- Places: Longbourn, Lucas Lodge, Netherfield, Rosings Park, Pemberley

William Wordsworth: 'Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, 1802':

'[The poet] is a man speaking to men – a man (it is true) endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him, delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions manifested in the goings-on of the universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. ...

But whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt but that the language which it will suggest to him must in liveliness and truth fall far short of that which is uttered by men in real life under the actual pressure of those passions – certain shadows of which the poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself.

However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a poet, it is obvious that while he describes and imitates passions, his situation is altogether slavish and mechanical compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes – nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs, modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose: that of giving pleasure. ...

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity. The emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on'.

Percy B. Shelley: 'A Defence of Poetry' (1821):

'Reason is to imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance. ...

Poetry is ever accompanied with pleasure: all spirits on which it falls, open themselves to receive the wisdom which is mingled with its delight. ...

A poet is a nightingale who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its won solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why. ...

Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar. ...

Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb. ...

All high poetry is infinite; it is as the first acorn, which contained all oaks potentially. ...

Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and the circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. It is at the same time the root and the blossom of all other systems of thought. ...

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds. ...

[W]hen composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conception of the poet. ...

Poets are 'those of the most delicate sensibility and the most enlarged imagination ... .

Poetry 'reproduces the common universe of which we are portions and percipients, and it purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being ... It creates anew the universe after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration. ...

Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.'

Percy B. Shelley: 'Ode to the West Wind'

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystàlline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?