

**Asia and the Victorians (EN277)**  
**First Assessed Essay Questions**  
**Due on 19 January 2016 (Tuesday, Week 2, Term 2)**

(5,000 words)

Answer **ONE** of the following questions. Feel free to formulate your own question in consultation with Dr Forman.

1. Explore the representation of widowhood in one or more of the readings from Term 1.
2. Matthew Kaiser argues, “Taylor’s self-incriminating imperial liberalism is more dangerous, in some ways, than the genocidal logic of white supremacy to which it presents itself as moral corrective, as ideological antidote” (85). Consider this statement with respect to either *Confessions of a Thug* or *Kim*.
3. Examine the role of dreams and dreaming—or of omens—in one or more of the texts from Term 1.
4. How do one or more of the texts from Term 1 create what Elleke Boehmer calls “strategic solidarities” (31) among British characters and/or readers?
5. How do one or more of the texts from Term 1 take up questions of honesty and dishonesty and/or issues of trust between and among European and Indian figures?
6. How do one or more of the texts from Term 1 use the idea of “London” (as a colonial centre, metropolis, place of nostalgia, marker of difference from India, etc.)?
7. Discuss the representation of “indigenous” knowledge and learning in one or more of the texts from Term 1.
8. According to Macaulay in his “Minute on Indian Education” (1835), “Whether we look at the intrinsic value of our literature, or at the particular situation of this country, we shall see the strongest reason to think that, of all foreign tongues, the English tongue is that which would be the most useful to our native subjects.” Evaluate this statement with respect to one or more of the works studied in Term 1.
9. How does dialogue structure the relationships between Indian and British characters in one or more of the texts from Term 1?
10. Examine the role of the natural environment in one or more of the works studied in Term 1. How are spaces such as the jungle, the desert, or the hills central to the embodied experience of India/Ceylon during the nineteenth century?
11. How do Anglophone Indian writers at the turn of the century express notions of freedom and independence (for India and/or for women)? Use at least two texts in your response.
12. How are issues of hygiene and cleanliness explored in two or more of the works studied?
13. Analyze the significance of Christmas in one or more of the texts from Term 1.
14. Explore the ways in which one or more of the writers from Term 1 use Irish or Scottish identities in the Indian context. What do such representations expose about “Britishness” and the ostensibly transcendental “English” nature of imperialism?
15. Write an essay on the representation of Queen Victoria in one or more of the pieces studied.

Your essay must have a strong central argument/thesis statement, which should appear towards the start. I will be expecting you to do close reading during the essay, commenting on issues such as narrative voice, style, etc. and the way in which these elements contribute to the title you have chosen.

The essay should use parenthetical citations for quotations and have a bibliography, which preferably conforms to the MLA style. Information on the MLA style can be found at [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org), or you can consult the MLA Handbook in the library. The Online Writing Lab at Purdue, <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/>, offers good guidance on how to formulate a thesis statement. I also recommend *The Craft of Research*, edited by Wayne Booth et al.

You are encouraged to do some degree of independent research for this assignment, which may include primary materials from the period (historical materials, contemporary criticism from journals or newspapers, other relevant literature, etc.) and/or criticism and theory. Via the library portal, you can access useful databases such as Empire Online, Gale News Vault, 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Newspapers, 19<sup>th</sup> Century UK Periodicals, the Times Digital Archives, Project Muse, the MLA International Bibliography, and Literature Online. See <http://webcat.warwick.ac.uk/search~S1?/venglish/venglish/1%2C7%2C154%2CB/exact&FF=venglish+all+primary+sources&1%2C38%2C> for further details. Remember that recent articles are normally embargoed for several years and will not appear in JSTOR.