

AS Level English Literature

F661 AS Level English Literature, Poetry and Prose 1800-1945 Medium banded Candidate style answer

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As these responses have not been through full moderation and do not replicate student work, they have not been graded and are instead, banded “medium” or “high” to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

Question 2

“Friend, open to Me.”

By what means and how successfully does Christina Rossetti show the reader the nature of her speaker’s relationship with God in ‘Despised and Rejected’? In your answer, make close reference to language, imagery and verse form, and show how this poem relates to others from the selection with a religious theme.

Despised and Rejected

My sun has set, I dwell
In darkness as a dead man out of sight;
And none remains, not one, that I should tell
To him mine evil plight
This bitter night.
I will make fast my door
That hollow friends may trouble me no more.
'Friend, open to Me.'—Who is this that calls?
Nay, I am deaf as are my walls:
Cease crying, for I will not hear
Thy cry of hope or fear.
Others were dear,
Others forsook me: what art thou indeed
That I should heed
Thy lamentable need?
Hungry should feed,
Or stranger lodge thee here?
'Friend, My Feet bleed.
Open thy door to Me and comfort Me.'
I will not open, trouble me no more.

Go on thy way footsore,
 I will not rise and open unto thee.
 'Then is it nothing to thee? Open, see
 Who stands to plead with thee.
 Open, lest I should pass thee by, and thou
 One day entreat My Face
 And howl for grace,
 And I be deaf as thou art now.
 Open to Me.'
 Then I cried out upon him: Cease,
 Leave me in peace:
 Fear not that I should crave
 Aught thou mayst have.
 Leave me in peace, yea trouble me no more,
 Lest I arise and chase thee from my door.
 What, shall I not be let
 Alone, that thou dost vex me yet?
 But all night long that voice spake urgently:
 'Open to Me.'
 Still harping in mine ears:
 'Rise, let Me in.'
 Pleading with tears:
 'Open to Me that I may come to thee.'
 While the dew dropped, while the dark hours were cold:
 'My Feet bleed, see My Face,
 See My Hands bleed that bring thee grace,
 My Heart doth bleed for thee,
 Open to Me.'
 So till the break of day:
 Then died away
 That voice, in silence as of sorrow;
 Then footsteps echoing like a sigh
 Passed me by,
 Lingering footsteps slow to pass.
 On the morrow
 I saw upon the grass
 Each footprint marked in blood, and on my door
 The mark of blood for evermore.

[30]

Candidate style answer	Examiner's commentary
<p> <i>"My sun has set, I dwell In darkness."</i> As this quotation from 'Despised and Rejected' shows, loneliness is definitely an emotion found in the depths of Rossetti's poetry. <u>In her own life she suffered from periods of depression and also found comfort in a strong religious faith and looking after people, and all these aspects of her life can be seen her poems.</u> At the start of the poem the speaker is alone ("not one remains, not </p>	<p> The writer receives credit for this contextual information about the poet, but would do better to integrate this information more effectively into the answer. </p>

one") and does not seem to have or want a relationship with anyone. The speaker says "I will make fast my door", a metaphor suggesting that she will not let anyone get in to her. Another poem with a locked door is 'Shut Out': "The door was shut".

For much of her life Christina Rossetti lived with few other people though she did receive two proposals, these she felt called upon to reject for different reasons to do with her religious faith. In the second stanza a new voice is heard which calls on the speaker: "Friend, open to Me". Similarly, there are also two voices in the poem 'Uphill' which is written in dialogue form with questions and answers: "Does the road wind uphill all the way? / Yes, to the very end." In 'Despised and Rejected', the speaker refuses to respond to this new voice because she has been let down by others in the past: "others forsook me". At the end of the stanza ("Hungry should feed, / Or stranger lodge thee here?") Rossetti refers to the bible: "I was hungry and you gave me food". The voice calling her could be the voice of the people who need her, reminding her that as a Christian she should be helping others, as indeed Rossetti dedicated herself to caring for others from an early age.

The third stanza starts "Friend, My Feet bleed". The capital letters at the start of "My Feet" and the idea of wounds in the feet make it clear that the voice is Jesus. It does seem surprising that Jesus is asking her for comfort when it seems that she needs his comfort. In the next stanza it seems even clearer that Jesus or God is speaking to her: "thou / One day entreat My Face / And howl for grace". The speaker might need forgiveness one day – desperately because she may "howl for grace". For the fifth time, the voice asks her to "Open" – this repetition shows how determined God is to save her. The speaker's answer in stanza five seems very ungracious: "Leave me in peace, yea trouble me no more." In the sixth stanza the tone becomes very despairing: "while the dark hours were cold". The repetition of "bleed" shows how Jesus suffers and he finally leaves because she still won't answer. The relationship between the speaker and God in this poem is definitely not a close one. The poem is very emotional, the speaker just wants to be left alone. The poem is like a lot of others by Rossetti which suggest that loving God is difficult, for example in 'Good Friday' where everyone weeps at Christ's cross except for the speaker who is "a stone". The relationship with

The writer has found a link to another poem, but has not made any use of that link – some analysis is needed here.

This is good AO2/AO4 comment, combining recognition of the contrasting voices heard in the targeted poem with recall of a similar technique in another poem from the selection.

This is a repetition of contextual information from the first paragraph.

The writer appropriately identifies the second voice in the poem; a better answer might have made this point earlier.

The writer offers appropriate AO2 analysis of the poem.

There is a useful reference here to the terms of the question.

There is a very clear focus on the

<p><u>God is not one that seems to bring happiness.</u> <i>God is like a traveller who asks for shelter but who she does not let in because she is afraid. The blood on her door is like the wounds of Jesus, maybe showing that she is guilty or else showing that Jesus's blood is there to save her 'for evermore'. This is also, however, a reference to the Old Testament.</i> Throughout the poem the line lengths are varied, this is typical of Christina Rossetti's other poems such as 'Twice'. It has been said that Rossetti's poems often end in frustration. I think this one does as God and the poet are separated despite their attempt to be together.</p>	<p>question here.</p> <p>This is a valid point but appears in the form of an assertion; a better answer would offer an explanation.</p>
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Question 9 (b)
'Nick Carraway is too deeply involved in events and relationships to be a reliable narrator.'
How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *The Great Gatsby*? **[30]**

Candidate style answer	Examiner's commentary
<p><u>In many novels the story is told in the third person by an omniscient narrator who knows everything, including the thoughts and feelings of all the characters.</u> <i>The Great Gatsby</i> is a well-known case of the story being told through the <u>first person narration of someone who is not the main character, Nick Carraway.</u> <u>First person narrators can also be called unreliable narrators because parts of the story may happen when they are not there and they may be biased.</u> Nick Carraway is a character who moves into a small house in West Egg next door to Jay Gatsby's mansion. Gatsby is the mysterious and glamorous character at the centre of the novel, and we always see him through Nick's eyes. <u>Nick can be called an unreliable narrator because he is not present at all the events he describes, for example he describes the deaths of Myrtle Wilson and Gatsby himself, but he is not present on either occasion.</u> He has to rely on accounts of other people including the report from the inquest. Even when Nick is present he can't always tell what people are thinking or feeling, but he seems to be a very intelligent person and we usually feel we can trust him when he is giving an opinion. Nick is an honest character, he says 'I am one of the few honest people I have ever known', <u>so the reader trusts Nick to tell the truth about what happens in the story.</u> <u>Another reason for a narrator being unreliable is if they get too involved emotionally to tell the</u></p>	<p>In this introduction, the writer demonstrates an awareness and understanding of literary terms (AO1), probably based on her critical reading. She does not need to quote from a critic to receive credit for this material.</p> <p>Well focused response, opening up debate (AO3).</p> <p>Here the writer illustrates her statement with a reference to the text (AO2).</p> <p>There is a failure of logic here: the writer has stated that narrators can be unreliable.</p>

story in an objective way. Nick is a good narrator because he is very careful to be fair to the people he describes, and he says at the start of the novel 'I'm inclined to reserve all judgements', meaning that he likes to give everybody a second chance and to be generous in his opinions. He takes a long time to make up his mind about people. In the end, he says about Tom and Daisy that they are 'careless' and they 'smash up things', and he decides to finish with Jordan, but he seems to find it impossible to make up his mind about Gatsby. When he says goodbye to Gatsby for the last time he says 'you're worth the whole damn bunch put together' but he also says 'I disapproved of him from beginning to end.' Nick also tells the reader what other people think about Gatsby so that we can make our own judgements of him.

The mystery of what to think about Gatsby is tied up with the mystery of the American Dream. The American dream is the idea that all Americans are entitled to achieve happiness and success in life, and in Gatsby's case he needs to have Daisy back to achieve the American dream. However, his love for Daisy is corrupted by money – he says that Daisy's voice is 'full of money' and he has spent his life making money by doubtful means so that he can win her back. Love of Daisy is closely connected to love of money. This is perhaps why Nick says that he 'disapproved' of Gatsby all the time.

Gatsby is an idealist like the first settlers in America – he has remained true to his dream of perfection. Although he seems to have made his money by corrupt methods, he never loses sight of his dream of Daisy. After he dies, his father shows Nick a book in which he wrote a schedule to improve himself. This gives us a view of Gatsby as naive and attractive. However, no one comes to the funeral and there are phone calls to the house suggesting that Gatsby was involved in shady business deals. Nick does seem to be very emotionally involved with Gatsby's character and his life, which might make him an unreliable narrator. However an important part of Gatsby is his great charm ("there was something gorgeous about him"), and Nick reveals an important aspect of Gatsby's character when he falls for his charm.

In my opinion Nick is a reliable narrator because he is honest and intelligent, and reports events accurately and understands the other characters well. His attachment to Gatsby means that he cannot always be objective about him,

Another strand to the argument is introduced (AO3).

Expression is consistently clear but not always entirely appropriate to literary study.

These quotations are very effective – brief and very well focused – even if the juxtaposition is rather abrupt.

This material is offered as context (AO4), but is rather vague and constitutes something of a diversion from the task, so can only receive limited credit.

The writer returns to a clearer focus on the task here, although the point is repeated.

This is a useful quotation and is presented concisely and effectively, but this aspect of the argument could usefully have been introduced at an earlier stage.

The conclusion responds directly to the question and is clearly

<i>but it also helps us to understand more about Gatsby's character.</i>	presented; however, it is simply a recapitulation of the argument in the essay.
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Overall banding: Medium

These answers are generally competent, but frequently leave some room for improvement. Both essays are generally focused on the question, although the response to 9(b) is occasionally digressive. The writer uses appropriate terminology and concepts, and the expression is clear and generally accurate. Both answers include some detailed analysis of the set texts, although this could often be further explored. The answer to 9(b) shows awareness that there may be differing views of a literary text by constructing and supporting its own argument in response to the quotation in the question. The treatment of context is competent throughout, but could be improved by being more fully integrated into the argument of each essay. The writer has probably benefited from some critical reading, but has not chosen to quote from any critical sources.