

# GCE 2004

## *June Series*



# Mark Scheme

## English Literature B

### *Unit LTB6*

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**June 2004****LTB6****Question One:**

This question refers to *Shooting an Elephant*, *We and They* and *Confession*.

Compare and contrast the attitudes towards different races shown in these texts and the ways in which these attitudes are presented.

*(40 marks)***Objectives tested: AO2, AO3**

Marks	Skills descriptors	
0 – 5 Band 1	AO2ii AO2ii AO3 AO3	Simple account of content Little sense of comparison across texts Very little understanding of genres, language features and structural devices Very little discussion of how authors' techniques shape meanings
6 – 12 Band 2	AO2ii AO2ii AO3 AO3	Some focus on the task with basic textual understanding; a little illustrative support Some comparison across texts Some limited understanding of genres, language features and structural devices Some limited discussion of how authors' techniques shape meanings
13 – 19 Band 3	AO2ii AO2ii AO3 AO3	Focus on task with some understanding of text; some illustrative support Some consideration of contrasts and comparisons across texts Some understanding of genres, language features and structural devices Some discussion of how authors' techniques shape meanings
20 – 26 Band 4	AO2ii AO2ii AO3 AO3	Clear focus on task with informed understanding of the text: apt supportive references Detailed consideration of contrasts and comparisons across texts Consideration of genres, language features and structural devices Consideration of how authors' techniques shape meanings
27 – 33 Band 5	AO2ii AO2ii AO3 AO3	Detailed understanding of the text and task: good selection of supportive references Detailed exploration of contrasts and comparisons across texts Exploration of genres, language features and structural devices Some evaluation of how authors' techniques shape meanings
34 – 40 Band 6	AO2ii AO2ii AO3 AO3	Secure, confident and well informed understanding of the text and task: excellent selection of supportive reference Detailed and perceptive evaluations of issues raised through contrasts and comparisons across texts Detailed exploration and analysis of genres, key language features and structural devices Perceptive evaluation of how authors' techniques shape meanings

**Possible content:**

**Orwell:** his attitude is initially identified as ‘bitter’ towards the native people who hate him, and scornful of them as not having ‘the guts to raise a riot’. He sees the British Empire (representative of the white race) as synonymous with ‘European’ and therefore all his attitudes are determined by which category people fit into. He does not see people as individuals. His attitude is ambivalent because he describes the British Empire as ‘an evil thing’ and views the Burmese as ‘oppressed’. However, his hatred of the oppressed because of their attitudes towards him confuses him. To the young Orwell the British Raj was ‘an unbreakable tyranny’ but he was unaware at the time that there were others that were worse. At least retrospectively he recognises that the ambivalent feelings he experienced are the inevitable result of the imperialist system.

As in any authoritarian system only those at the top of the hierarchy can act. This dilemma is at the heart of the essay along with Orwell’s tendency to despise the crowd on the one hand and to worry about appearing a fool in front of them on the other hand. This leads to the epiphanic moment when Orwell realises ‘the hollowness, the futility of the white man’s dominion in the East’. He only appears to be the leading actor. In reality action is dependent on the will of the people. The ‘sahib’ is a hollow figure, one of his major preoccupations being to save face. Orwell would rather die than be made to look foolish.

**Point of view:** Subjective, first person narrative helps to secure the empathy of the reader. No attempt to hide his feelings. However, the incident is described in retrospect (it occurred ten years before the essay was written) so he has achieved some insights into the British Empire in the meantime. However, his honesty is all the more striking in view of his apparent unawareness of some of his attitudes, eg his failure to see Burmese people as individuals.

**Language:** Matter-of-fact opening with wry humour of second part of sentence suggests both honesty and self-awareness. But proliferation in opening paragraph of emotive words evoking strength of Orwell’s dislike of the natives: ‘petty’, ‘hideous’, ‘sneering’, ‘hooted’ and ‘jeer’. The contrast sets up the façade of the urbane European and the reality of his normal human feelings. Further brought out by ‘Theoretically – and secretly of course – I was all for the Burmese...’ At one level Orwell very aware of the conflict; he refers to ‘one part of my mind’ and ‘another part’. For further comment on language use see Item Two.

**Structure:** Use of language closely associated with structure of the essay. Balanced and carefully constructed sentences a feature. Descriptive effect in ‘(The elephant) had already destroyed somebody’s bamboo hut...’ Cumulative effect through listing, repetition of ‘and’.

Descriptions of on the one hand the Dravidian coolie and on the other the dying elephant important in the structure of the essay. The coolie lacks individuality but seems almost a sacrificial figure ‘with arms crucified’ on the one hand and yet on the other associated with the ‘devilish’. Orwell describes his stripped skin in terms of skinning a rabbit, whereas when he describes the elephant it is seen in anthropomorphic terms as having ‘a grandmotherly air’. In paragraph beginning ‘But at that moment I glanced round...’ Orwell employs many words suggestive of the façade of Empire and its pointlessness: ‘hollowness’, ‘futility’, ‘puppet’, ‘dummy’. A particularly telling metaphor is ‘He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it’. The story moves towards its climax in the description of the dying elephant. The epiphany reached earlier when Orwell realises the futility of Empire seems to be acted out in the fall of the elephant. The long drawn out agony of the dying animal epitomises the futility of Empire and perhaps foreshadows its fall. The public argument as to whether the elephant should have been killed has an ironic ring to the reader who has been made aware of the real conflict behind the shooting, which is emphatically highlighted in the brief concluding sentence.

**Setting:** Its importance clear from the opening words, ‘At Moulmein, in Lower Burma...’ However, the opening does not establish the physical setting other than through brief references to the ‘football field’ and ‘the town’. A more detailed description is given from the fourth paragraph onwards, where the physical details of the rather seedy environment lead via dialogue to the focus on describing the body of the dead coolie, thereby associating him with the seedy surroundings. Orwell’s lack of empathy with his surroundings again evoked in his description of ‘a miry waste of paddy fields... soggy from the first rains...’ The setting as a whole is presented as unpleasant both in terms of the natural and the man-made environment. Early in the essay Orwell writes of ‘The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups...’

**The Poems:** Based on the ‘Them and Us’ view of life but by writing about it shows both its universality and also how ludicrous it is. Berry’s poem concerns the realisation by an adolescent that struggle is not the curse of Caribbean people but is something experienced by all races. Orwell’s essay is more personal than Kipling’s poem. It reveals less that is universal in experience perhaps. Both poems are concerned with prejudice and both counter it. Kipling shows that the prejudices of one race are in equilibrium with the prejudices of another, while Berry shows that it is possible for a black girl to break out of the chain of prejudice in which she is brought up. Orwell does not suggest any likelihood of breaking out of the cycle of prejudice. ‘Confession’ could be read in a number of ways. The reader is likely to ask why the girl grew up thinking that black people were of no account. It might be understandable that she felt the society around her presented a totally biased view of black people and their abilities but odd that her own family should have supported that view so effectively. If the sentence beginning ‘Black people couldn’t run their own countries...’ is meant to be read ironically it seems somewhat overstated and also at variance with the mother’s apparently firmly held belief that ‘black people were cursed’. If it is not meant to be read ironically the reader is left to conclude that the persona’s own parents ‘couldn’t even run/ a good two-people relationship’. However, it might be read simply as a list of the prejudiced views the persona grew up hearing from the white majority. The revelation through art suggests that the reader should take the earlier part of the poem seriously rather than ironically. The recognition that people of other races also struggle appears to be a revelation also that bias is not simply something whites have towards blacks but an endemic part of human nature. People of all races have needs and no one particular race is cursed.

**Form:** Obvious major genre contrast between prose essay and poetry; students should also be aware of the two poems belonging to different sub-genres. ‘We and They’ is in five stanzas, each eight lines long, the lines varying between trochaic and iambic rhythms and between three and five feet long. There is a rhyme scheme of a fairly regular pattern throughout. ‘Confession’ is a free verse paragraph with very varied line lengths and no rhyme. Candidates need to be aware of the different effects of the two different approaches.

**Point of view:** All three texts use first person, but whereas ‘Confession’ uses a female persona, ‘We and They’ uses the plural ‘We’ throughout as though writing on behalf of all British people; the extent to which Kipling genuinely allies himself with the ‘We’ of the British in general is open to interpretation and the poem contains a good deal of irony. ‘Confession’ expresses an individual point of view. It deals, like ‘We’, with general prejudices, but an examination of them leads the persona to a revelation about life. Kipling, speaking through the personae of the ignorant mass of people of any race, feigns astonishment at other people’s views but only to highlight the obvious truth that ‘We’ and ‘They’ are in the end indistinguishable, only existing in separation by virtue of people’s perceptions. ‘Confession’ on the other hand suggests that the persona has had an insight that genuinely separates her from most other people, including her own family, who share the same bias as white people simply from the other end of the spectrum. There is also a more complicated viewpoint in ‘Confession’; since, as the title suggests, the viewpoint of the ‘I’ of the poem is mediated through the unknown person to whom she has confessed her feelings. Difference in viewpoint of essay is that it is avowedly Orwell’s own voice, not that of a separate narrator.

**Language:** Kipling's language is very simple, almost childlike and that feeling is strengthened through the jogging rhythm that results from the mixture of iambs, trochees and anapaests. Some of the emotive words are ones we associate with the unformed views of children, 'gobble', 'disgusting' and 'feast'. This has the effect of showing that the prejudices people hold are the result of total ignorance and lack of education and maturity. Other emotive words point up the bias of adults through the kind of words we might expect to hear from them, 'scandalous', 'impudent' and 'impossible'. The easy rhythm echoes the complete lack of rationality on which these views are based. The use of the plural 'We' throughout reminds us that people's prejudices feed upon the view of the crowd and clichéd exclamations such as 'think of it' and 'would you believe it' underline that fact. The parody of the speech of the prejudiced mass is very effective in its movement from simple statements of fact, 'We shoot birds with a gun' to apparently innocent statements, 'All good people agree', which on examination are neither facts nor innocuous. Berry begins with words that suggest illness, 'I had a condition'. This is then qualified by the explanatory 'I was born in England you see.' The implication is that the 'condition' is consequent upon the location with the glancing reference to 'a Caribbean island' suggesting something very different. We may take the succession of sentences beginning 'Black people couldn't...' as the expressions commonly used by the prejudiced, to whom 'black people' are all the same. As with 'We', the language is relatively simple, its effect often reliant on use of repetition. The more complicated point of view affects the reading of the language, which is at times the language of the overall narrator but simultaneously the language of the 'I' persona and also of the prejudiced mass. Little in either poem that is straightforwardly metaphorical. However, 'Confession' has religious overtones through the dichotomy between the title and the repeated 'cursed', which is repudiated at the end. The use of the painting brings visual imagery into the poem and suggests that the painting of struggle is being used as a parallel artefact to the poem itself, both metaphors for the universal human struggle. Kipling's poem is full of striking visual images, 'They who gobble their rice off a leaf' and 'They drink milk or blood'. The images are striking because they are simple and because they are simple they reflect the ignorance of those who base their judgements upon them. As with 'Confession' we might look on the whole poem as a metaphor for the divided world of racial prejudice. Orwell's language contrasts with Berry's largely because of different contexts in which it is written.

**Structure:** Kipling's use of stanza form, alternate rhyme, jogging rhythm, all reinforce the idea of the ubiquitous and cyclical nature of prejudice. He uses the iambic pentameter in each stanza's penultimate line to build up to an exclamation with use of hyphen or parenthesis. This, along with the final line in each stanza presents the alternative view of the other 'side', hence the tone of indignation and the sense of breathless wonder that anyone could take such a view. The ironic nature of the poet's viewpoint combines most effectively with the structure and choice of language to highlight the utterly irrational nature of prejudice, but also the impossibility of ever eradicating it. Berry uses the flexibility of free verse to give a colloquial flavour to the poem and structures it partly through the notion of 'confession', where a story is told and in this case is being retold, albeit using almost entirely the speaker's own words. The opening establishes the speaker's time of life very clearly; she has just celebrated her eighteenth birthday, ie grown up. At the same time she is celebrating her maturity achieved through the revelation a painting has afforded her about life. The poem progresses very logically from the statement of her 'condition', through an explanation of the false views that created it, to the revelation of its lack of truth and finally through the evidence for her new view to a firm closure with the short clear statement of the final line. Repetition is a device much used here to give a sense of structure, eg repetition of 'couldn't' which is contrasted in the conclusion with the positive use of negatives in 'No. Not cursed'. The central point of the poem establishes the mother's view 'black people were cursed', which is set against the final line. Plenty of other examples can be found. Structure of prose essay essentially different from structure of poems.

NB: unusual situation in that all three literary texts on this paper are complete texts.

**Question Two:**

Items Two, Three and Four are concerned with aspects of Empire and Ethnicity. In the light of your reading of this material, write about:

- the contribution Item Two has made to your understanding of Orwell's *Shooting an Elephant*;
- the ideas in Items Three and Four and whether you have found them helpful in interpreting Orwell's essay and Kipling's poem.

(40 marks)

**Objectives tested: AO1, AO4, AO5**

Marks	Skills descriptors	
0 – 5 Band 1	AO1 AO4 AO4 AO5ii	Technical weaknesses which impede the communication of meaning / unclear line of argument Little understanding of different interpretative approaches Little personal response based on slender evidence or misreading Very limited relevance to texts/context/task
6 – 12 Band 2	AO1 AO4 AO4 AO5ii	Simple attempt at structuring argument / some use of critical vocabulary but some technical weakness Reference to different interpretations of text Some evidence of personal response Some limited awareness of links across texts/context/task
13 – 19 Band 3	AO1 AO4 AO4 AO5ii	Use of critical vocabulary and generally clear expression / some structured argument Some consideration of different interpretations of text Evidence of personal response with some illustrative support Awareness of links across texts/context/task
20 – 26 Band 4	AO1 AO4 AO4 AO5ii	Clear expression and use of accurate critical vocabulary / clear line of argument Clear consideration of different interpretations of text Clear evidence of personal response with illustrative support Clear consideration of links across texts/context/task
27 – 33 Band 5	AO1 AO4 AO4 AO5ii	Accurate expression and effective use of appropriate critical vocabulary / well structured argument Clear consideration of different interpretations of text and some evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses Clear and detailed evidence of personal response with good selection of supportive references Detailed exploration of links across texts/context/task
34 – 40 Band 6	AO1 AO4 AO4 AO5ii	Technically fluent style and use of appropriate critical vocabulary/ well structured and coherent argument Perceptive consideration of different interpretations of text with evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses Clear and detailed evidence of confident personal response with excellent selection of supportive reference Perceptive evaluation of links across texts/context/task

**First bullet:****Possible content:**

- passage sets Orwell's essay in historical context. Helps reader to understand that stereotypical views limited;
- also sets in literary context;
- emphasises diversity of opinion;
- relates those contemporary contexts to viewpoints of postcolonial criticism;
- focus on significance of white, male viewpoint; Eurocentricity;
- difference between Orwell and many of his contemporaries but also similarities; resulting ambivalence;
- how that ambivalence may be revealed through language; how language reveals attitudes; relationship between focus on narrator and other people who feature in the essay;
- the issue of gender.

**Second bullet:****Possible content:**

Item Three puts the British Empire into its historical context, while Item Four gives the viewpoint of a British subject involved in the administration of the Empire.

**Passage from Niall Ferguson's *Empire*:** Some of the ways in which candidates might find this passage useful are:

- it makes clear that there are two diametrically opposed views on the British Empire; this is echoed in the Orwell story through Orwell's own divided views and in the Kipling poem through its basis in the opposing 'We' and 'They';
- the view that reparation should be made to the Empire's 'victims' and the lumping together of colonialism and slavery make interesting reading in conjunction with the Orwell story. Ferguson's use of the words 'casually lumped together' suggests his own doubt about the rationality of this view. Orwell's examination of a particular situation and the human feelings of the central actor might be said to show us the unwisdom of making simplistic judgements such as those of the UN World Conference. The human reality is always more complicated;
- however, candidates might agree with the UN wording and refer to the short story and Orwell's view of the Burmese and the way they were treated during the Empire as proof of it. Similarly Kipling's references to people who 'gobble their rice off a leaf', live up trees and pay 'Wizards' for treatment could be seen to constitute degrading attitudes to people of other races;
- words such as 'oppression', 'exploitation' and so on might be picked out by candidates and examined in the light of the literary responses to Empire;
- the notion of how far History is objective and whether there is any 'truth' in it might well be discussed. How far does the introduction appear to set out the opposing views, with the intention of being fair to both? The 'truth' or otherwise of a historian's examination of evidence might be compared with the ways poets and story-tellers make use of similar evidence;
- candidates might comment on the fact that Ferguson is looking back on the Empire after its demise, whereas Orwell and Kipling write from their own experience of it.

**Passage from John Buchan's *Memory Hold-the-Door*:**

- might be regarded as useful in showing a view of the Empire vastly different from most of the views current today and therefore showing a historical perspective. Difficult to reconcile some of the current views about 'victims' and 'genocide' with Buchan's high-minded idealism;



- Buchan uses words like ‘vision’, ‘idealism’, ‘inspiration’, which suggest that he saw the management of Empire as something noble. Views on this could be very varied, from those who sympathise with his view to those who think he was completely deluded or simply patronising;
- like Orwell and Kipling, however, Buchan had personal experience of the Empire;
- candidates might pick up on the word ‘fanatic’ with various interpretations;
- the idealistic view of ‘a world-wide brotherhood’ is interesting in the light of Kipling’s poem and Orwell’s story, neither of which show any real sense of brotherhood in the actual workings of the Empire. Candidates might question ‘the background of a common race and creed’. What does it all mean? That all subject peoples have an element of Britishness through their conquerors? What did this ‘federation’ mean in practice for the subject peoples? Orwell’s essay shows us and Kipling’s poem suggests the attitudes of the British towards people with different cultures from their own.

There are many possible approaches but candidates need to make some detailed reference to both passages and to address ‘helpful’.