

Examiners' Report
January 2013

GCE English Literature 6ET01 01

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Introduction

Section A – Unseen Poetry & Prose

This part of the exam offers candidates a choice of response. Two unseen texts are set – one poem and one prose extract, followed by three short answer tasks. Candidates had to choose one or the other passage to answer on. The question is worth 20 marks and assesses AO1 (10 marks overall) and AO2 (10 marks overall).

Section B - Poetry

The vast majority of candidates understand the rubric for this section of the exam. However there are those who occasionally infringe by answering a (b) task without referring to the named poem or by responding to a “Home” question using “Work” texts. This leads to zero or limited marks being accessed by the candidate. Centres will remind candidates already of the requirements of the specification and the instructions on the paper itself are clear.

Section C

The prose section of the paper continues to attract a generally sound or better level of response. Candidates appear to understand what is required and there is often evidence of insight and understanding in their answers. However some candidates continue to narrate or describe rather than analyse and extend their arguments. On the whole this tendency is diminishing.

Question 1

The poem set was *The Machines Mourn the Passing of People*

by Alicia E. Stallings.

1 (a) The instruction for this task was to write about rhyme. Many candidates were able to identify the ABBA pattern and a large proportion could see that it might reflect the constancy of the machines' existences or generate emphasis on certain key words such as "use" and "abuse". There was some apposite discussion of the effect of half rhymes such as "lawn" and "gone". Some candidates saw that the rhyme might be adding to tone, mood or voice with occasional answers focusing interestingly on the idea that, in places, the rhyme was forced and created mild humour. It remains true that, inspired by the template provided by the Sample Materials for 6ET01, some candidates default to evaluating the effect of the specified device as 'song-like' or 'lyrical'. This has been far less true of most of the poems so far set for the live exams than it was of the Yeats example in the starter pack.

1 (b) This response scored 5 out of 5 for its grasp of imagery and its effects.

1 (c) There was some good discussion of narrative voice, with many responses identifying the nostalgic, wistful or melancholic aspect of *The Machines Mourn...* This said, several candidates were unable to get much beyond the deployment of the first person. Even when they did move into considerations of rhetorical features or irony, candidates' answers would have been more effective if they had exemplified, however briefly. The importance of reading the title of the poem carefully was borne out clearly in the candidates who thought that the collective "we" of the narrative voice was that of soldiers, children, ghosts, sacked workers and so on.

(b) Poets often make use of imagery.

Using **two** examples from the poem, explore the effect of imagery in the poem.

(AO2 = 5)

The image of hands is prominent in the first stanza of the poem. They were described as 'clumsy' and emitting 'warmth'. This sets a contrast between the persona being that of a machine and the workers as human. Humans are not as systematic and perfect as machines, yet it is ^{through} ~~the~~ their touch that establishes a relationship between the two. The image of hands as a synecdoche of humans ^{that} shows ~~the~~ close contact with the machine.

Also, another interesting image that should be noted is the image of dogs used ~~it~~ as a simile on the machines. They were described to be 'kicked like dogs' when broken. It seems ~~not~~ demeaning to be kicked ~~like~~ and treated like animals, but the machines find it an honour - perhaps the fact that the workers choose to respond to machines as if they could hear them makes the machines feel that they were more than mere objects, thus ^{they feel they are worth it} ~~being able to be~~ and show human endurance as they ~~grit~~ ~~grit~~ ~~the~~ 'grit their cogs'.



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The candidate chose two examples efficiently and comments perceptively on their use and effect.

Question 2

The extract set was from *The Flowers* by Alice Walker.

2 (a) Sound devices were the focus of the task here. Despite the oft repeated injunction in previous Reports and Training materials, several candidates ignored the notion of alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia and sibilance, which appeared in abundance.

Some candidates' discussions on "silence" and the "yelp" of Myop did not include labelling for what it was.

AO1 is the assessment objective here and that stipulates "terminology", which requires answers to be very specific.

2 (b) Language choice was also relatively safe ground for many. This answer scored full marks.

2 (c) This response to 2 (c) received 7 out of 10 (3 plus 4).

(b) Writers make use of language choices.

Identify and comment on the use of language choices in this extract.

(AO2 = 5)

The use of language in this extract is very descriptive and helps to create a vision of the characters surrounding the descriptive language is used when talking about the scenery, "blue planes with relatively ridged and sweet-scented bark pull of the brown, fragrant buds", the effect of this is that it creates an almost fantasy-like and picture-esque setting which is immediately deconstructed by the characters discovery in line 26 of the extract, "large white teeth, all of them cracked or broken, long fingers, and very big bones", this ~~low~~ ^{contrast} makes the ~~contrast~~ ^{contrast} ~~contrast~~ between the beautiful setting and the visions of death and decay. In addition, the use of the word "cracked" creates a fitting sound and reflects the violent act that the men had done to himself.



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Here, the candidate maintains a good focus on the specifics of language use and its effects, exemplifying to good purpose.

(c) Writers make use of character.

Using your knowledge of character, discuss the ways in which it is developed in this passage.

(AO1 = 5, AO2 = 5)

On our first meeting of 'Myop', we are given the impression of a little girl, who is innocent, and lacks any real sense of danger. For example, the fact that she "vaguely" keeps an eye out for snakes, shows that she has a certain absence of awareness to danger. This also helps to remind us that she is only an innocent child. A key method that the writer has used to develop the character is to reflect the characters and their personalities the setting.

"Myop watched the tiny white bubbles..."

The setting is described in a very delicate manner, which I believe reflects the gentle personality of Myop, and ~~also~~ also helps to develop her character.

The ~~man~~ man in the passage is described in a very different way however, and therefore comes across to the reader in a very different light.

"He had been a tall man. From feet to neck covered a long space."

This description makes the body of the man very mysterious. The writer also uses a lot of imagery to describe the body, man, such as that he had "cracked or broken" teeth. We are also told that many of his clothes have rotted away. This strong use of imagery helps the remains of the man to sound very intimidating, despite the fact that he is dead.



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The candidate is successful in identifying some of the techniques used by Walker (setting, imagery) to help present character but does not go quite far enough or demonstrate great insight. The comments are, especially in relation to Myop, sound, but straightforward.

Question 3 (a)

3 (a) As with most other tasks in sections B and C, the *mildly* contentious nature of the quotation "Home is only where we store our memories" was intended to spur debate, but often led to the focus of many essays being fairly general agreement, frequently to the detriment of the technical and literary aspects of the discussion. For example, *Aunt Julia*, *House of Hospitalities*, *Piano* and *Autobiography* were regularly treated to a fairly narrative run-through before the conclusion was reached that yes, the only function of home was as a repository for recollection.

Some answers used a third poem, often to introduce note of counter-point. This worked for many answers, but did not always work where there was a bolt-on final paragraph or two at the end of the response.

Question 3 (b)

"Poems about home must engage the interest through dramatic mood and tone if they are to work."

In the poems *End of Another Home Holiday* by D.H. Lawrence and *The Self-Unseeing* by Thomas Hardy, the poets make use of dramatic mood and tone in order to engage readers as one of the key elements to making the poems "work".

Firstly, in *End of Another Home Holiday*, the title prepares readers for what may perhaps be a cheerful read as people associate holidays with pleasant experiences. However the poem begins with a series of rhetorical questions: "When shall I see the half moon sink again...?" proving that the persona is puzzled and perhaps grieved that he is leaving his home and cannot wait to return, thus creating a melancholic mood.



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This introduction is clear and well-stated. Particularly notable is the determined sense of dealing with the question and the emphasis (even perhaps mildly ironic) on which are the "key elements to making the poems 'work'". The candidate scored 32 (12 + 4 + 16).

Question 4 (a)

The candidate in this extract is writing about the significance of poetry about place needing to generate a powerful emotion if it is to succeed.

There is a lot of use of colour in this poem, especially the colour (the colour of the Scottish flag) the use of colour to describe the imagery of the land creates a vivid picture in the audience's head; the use of blue such as; "blue berries", "milkwort blue as summer skies", "blue butterflies" and "blackberries" in the dialect of Scotland presents a sense of patriotism that is very powerful and you know the voice really feels strong about this.



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This passage is precise, detailed and focused on the task. It makes good use of quotations and is pleasingly phrased.

The mark received overall was 34 (13 + 4 + 17).

Question 4 (b)

4 (b) Permanence, physical or otherwise. Several candidates rushed straight to *Beeny Cliff*, understandably enough, and provided more or less compelling analyses of physical immovability compared to emotional transience or, sometimes, the lasting power of memory connected to such a fixed location. Quite often the named poem (not *Beeny Cliff*) suffered relatively scant treatment. Whilst the rubric states "Using **one** of the following poems as a starting point compare and contrast how poets present land in **at least one other** poem." There is a need here to focus at least partially on the specified item.

Question 5 (a)

5 (a) The assertion re: "the dignity of honest toil (being) always worth celebrating" provoked some interesting responses, with many answers challenging the proposition directly. There was a lot of good and powerfully felt remonstrance centring on Harrison's portrayal of Patience Kershaw in *Working*, for instance. Some candidates ignored the statement and simply compared descriptions of work from various texts. 'Toads' was an obvious popular choice, both from *Here to Eternity* and from the *Oxford Anthology*, and often paired with 'The Chimney Sweeper' for example.

Question 5 (b)

5 (b) The suggestion that the best writing about work "depends on conveying a really vivid sense of the workplace as well as describing the work itself" was intended in part to steer candidates away from straightforward narration. To a point, this was achieved. However, several candidates presented elements of or sometimes a complete "prepared response" which did not relate to the question. This was especially the case of *Thoughts After Ruskin* where many candidates skipped the task almost completely and wrote about gender representation. Candidates must be reminded that they need to focus on the task to access marks.

Question 6 (a)

There was much discussion of specific examples of neglect, (or 'neglection', as it was frequently called). Some essays, as in previous sessions, tended to over focus on the red room section of 'Jane Eyre' and /or Lowood school. Some candidates showed an appreciation of the implications of the 'neglectful': "In all this, Bronte is perhaps appealing directly to the neglectful, showing them the consequences...imploring them to change." A number of candidates explored and compared the effect of neglect on Jane – it strengthens her character – and in "Wide Sargasso Sea", Antoinette – causing the demise of her self-esteem.

Those writing about "The Magic Toyshop" had plentiful seams to mine, not only of Melanie but also Margaret. Here too, improvements might have been made by reference not only to Philip (very obviously neglectful) but to the methods used to present the concepts of being both neglected and neglecting.

Question 6 (b)

Candidates found plenty to explore here, commencing mainly with character and many went beyond this. There was some effective exploration of contrasts in outer or physical appearance and inner being, in gender and in social class: "The contrast between Jane and Blanche Ingram demonstrates how successful femininity in Victorian times depended on looks and family background". Some answers dealt well with setting and the significance of contrasts within it; others focused on theme.

Candidates writing about "Wide Sargasso Sea" had the opportunity to discuss similar issues of class, setting and theme as well as characters, many centring on Antoinette sensibly enough. Melanie's transformation from girl to woman during the course of the narrative is obviously replete with contrast in "The Magic Toyshop". This was often as far as candidates ventured.

Question 7 (a)

There were some thoughtful and informed answers here, including some interesting counter arguments that lack of power is also corrupting in its own way. Some answers were too broadly about issues of power with insufficient attention paid to corruption. Other candidates explored Greene's depiction of violence as a means of establishing power, using examples such as Pinkie's deliberate cruelty, in grabbing Rose and "pinching her" for instance. Some candidates considered corruption in the police and law, and the degradation of women. One answer argued that Pinkie's violence is an acknowledgement of the weakness of his power base.

Some essays made rudimentary references to the second text and some compared specific detail between them. There was much to say about Alex's role in "A Clockwork Orange" and many candidates seized with glee on the way in which the various forms of power in the narrative are both corrupt and corrupting. Personal and political power were potential focuses in "Lies of Silence" and candidates dealt much better with the latter.

Question 7 (b)

Setting is also used by Greene to create dramatic situations. When Pinkie is in the "empty garage" after being chased from the racecourse, he considers giving up his violence. This dramatic situation is complemented by "the dusty interior", which creates an ominous mood. The ~~the~~ objects in the garage, "all the junk the owner had no room for," adds to the impression that Pinkie has hit rock bottom. However, for Pinkie, his only ~~is~~ fear is the attack on his pride, "He had wept, begged, run; Dallow and Cubitt would hear of it". This complements the theme of pride running throughout the entire book. Pinkie is proud of his Catholicism, yet has rejected their ideas. Lola has pride in creating her own sense of right and wrong, "I believe in fair play". However, Greene undermines her because her decision to chase

Pinkie is determined by a board, which the reader knows to be wrong. She ~~is~~ also frequently uses aphorisms for fair play, "broken hearts always mend", "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", which have connotations of a glib superficiality surrounding Lola, who epitomises the secular society.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate scored 11 and 20. The excerpts here deal appositely with the use of setting to create dramatic mood and tone in both novels under discussion.

Question 8 (a)

Elizabeth is a strong, independent woman who doesn't subscribe to social expectation. During the Regency Era, women were expected to marry to avoid destitution. However, even with a good life provided for by Mr Collins, ~~she~~ ^{Elizabeth} rejects him. Most other women would have accepted it, but not that shows Elizabeth's independence. Her refusal to bend to social convention is one way that identity is ^{presented}.

The ~~manner~~ manner of her refusal of Mr. Collins shows her opinion of marriage. Mr Collins intended to marry for very practical reasons, "to set the example ~~in~~ of matrimony in his parish"; to "add very greatly to [his]

happiness" and to please his patroness. Mr Collins represents the stereotypical view of marriage during the Regency Era - to marry for practical reasons. Elizabeth rejects him because her views are astronomically different. The contrast between the two individuals is created by Elizabeth's identity and her view of marriage being for love. Humour is created by Austen in "It was ~~also~~ absolutely necessary to stop him now". This emphasises the ~~gap~~ gulf in opinion between them while creating interest in the reader through irony.

Elizabeth's independence is reinforced by Mr Collins's proposal, as he provides a multitude of reasons ~~not~~ to accept him, yet she does not. The lower status of women in society is brought to light in "I am, to inherit this estate ~~of~~ after the death of your honoured father" and in

Mr Collins' expecting to get a positive answer as shown
in "when we are married". This further sets Elizabeth
apart from the stereotype as she turns away from a
good proposal due to her character, due to her identity.



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Examiner Comments

Context is not being assessed in this section of the paper but here the candidate adeptly acknowledges its significance in relation to identity, without overstating the background detail. Commentary about the Regency era is neatly woven into the discussion as opposed to "bolted on". The answer achieved 13 & 22 (35).

Question 8 (b)

The small number of candidates answering this task spent a long time dealing with the specifics of the named passage and didn't get much beyond it. This is not necessarily a bad thing but the injunction to explore the rest of the novel cannot be wholly ignored. There are moments of suspense in "Pride and Prejudice" and they are often subtly engendered. The idea that they might deserve more acknowledgement was intended to generate argument. It did not often achieve this aim.

"The Yellow Wallpaper" once more predominated as a supporting text. Suspense is created in that narrative and candidates had more joy in dealing with it, though there was quite a lot of narrative recount.

"The French Lieutenant's Woman" might seem an even longer novel were it not for its suspenseful moments. It was perfectly acceptable here to approach only one or two of these in answering the question. The task of addressing them all would have been almost impossible in the time available.

Question 9 (a)

Shug Making use of suddenly descriptive and image-inspiring vocabulary language, Celie is shown to describe Shug's body as 'long' and 'black' with 'big plump nipples'; certainly a change in the way Celie writes brought about by love, made to seem unusual by the fact that Celie has such sudden deep feelings for Shug having 'just seen her naked, and even though she has ~~the~~ ^{her} mouth just part with claws', another example of Celie's developed language due to love. In a similar way, Heathcliff's language is shown by Brontë to undergo changes from its normal, violent diction ('I will wrench them off her fingers') to using simple, physical verbs in the case of when he grieves for Cathy a 'come in! come in!' and demands that she 'come in! come in!', as well as becoming arguably poetic when he describes the 'abyss' that he has been left in by Cathy. Heathcliff's language, therefore, is greatly affected

at times by his ^{love} ~~love~~ for Cathy, demonstrating to the reader the effect that this unusual love can have over Heathcliff's usually 'black-eyed', ^{Byronic} characters.



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Here the candidate writes to good purpose about the specifics of how language is used to present 'unusual' love. The answer scored 12 and 22 (34).

Question 9 (b)

The invitation to write about male characters proved an appealing one for a reasonable number of candidates in the overall context of the exam. Heathcliff drew much of the interest, as might have been expected, but there was some discussion of Linton, Hareton and Hindley as well. A proportion of candidates decided that the assertion in the question simply wasn't true and that the female characters were by far the more engaging. Accordingly, they wrote about Catherine the elder and Catherine the younger, as well as Isabella occasionally. This was not an unacceptable strategy as long as there had also been *some* consideration of their masculine counterparts at least.

The supporting texts were similarly handled, though there was less effective appreciation of how both Hawthorne and Walker introduced and developed male figures in their narratives. Indeed, the primary strategy was to disagree with the proposition regarding both "The Scarlet Letter" and "The Color Purple", and launch straight into discourses on Hester or Celie. Whilst there is obviously less interest in the male characters in the secondary texts, they still present interesting possibilities for the reader and if dealt with candidates could gain additional marks.

Question 10 (a)

'In a' conclusion, both 'Howards End' and 'The Remains of the Day' are stories of emotional growth

as the writers present interweaving relationships coupled with the underlying theme of love in order to portray a sense of moralistic value. Love ~~is~~ conquers all, no matter what ~~is~~ your social circumstance



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This effective conclusion neatly summarises a thoughtful and well-developed argument, reasonably typical of the responses to 10a. The response scored 13 and 22 (35) overall.

Question 10 (b)

The Schlegel sisters make a number of choices and their process of choosing is not always straightforward, so this task should have offered plenty for candidates to consider. Of course Helen and Margaret are not the only characters who make choices in "Howards End" and there were plainly possibilities in Leonard Bast and Mr. Wilcox for example.

Stevens' choices in "The Remains of the Day" are similarly interestingly presented as are those of a number of characters in "The Shooting Party", which continues to be the least written about text in those prescribed for the exam.

Very few candidates answered this question which makes further comments on trends difficult.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Address the terms of the task as precisely as possible in Section A.
- Make use of appropriate terminology in Section A.
- Continue to limit, as a general rule to two examples, even where this is not specified, in 1a and 1b or 2a and 2b.
- Quote from the text/s in all Sections.
- Ensure that answers are based on the correct named text for the poetry anthology in Section B.
- Remember some part of answers in Section C need to deal in relatively close detail with the secondary text.
- Part of responses should be on the set passage in Section C if a (b) task is chosen.
- Avoid narrative re-count, plot focus and solely character-driven discussions in Section C.

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