

393/01

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

ELang3: Exploring Language in Use

A.M. FRIDAY, 26 May 2006

(1½ Hours)

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

In addition to this examination paper, you will need an 8 page answer book.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Answer **one** question.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Both questions carry equal marks.

In this unit you will be assessed on your ability to:

- communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to the study of language, using appropriate terminology and accurate and coherent written expression;
- know and use key features of frameworks for the systematic study of spoken and written English;
- understand, discuss and explore concepts and issues relating to language in use;
- distinguish, describe and interpret variation in the meanings and forms of spoken and written language according to context.

Remember that marking will take into account the quality of written communication used in your answers.

Answer **one** question.

Either,

1. The following three texts are about eighteenth-century highwaymen.

Text A is the blurb on the back of the novel *Dick Turpin* by Richard Carpenter, published in 1979. In his Introduction to the novel, Mr. Carpenter points out that he is more interested in the legend than the truth.

Text B is an extract from the novel *Paul Clifford* by Bulwer Lytton, written in 1830.

Text C is from a review by Kathryn Hughes of the book *Dick Turpin: The Myth of the English Highwayman* by James Sharpe. The review was published in *The Guardian* newspaper on 31 January 2004.

Analyse and discuss the use of language in these texts.

Your answer should include exploration and analysis of some or all of the following:

- lexis;
- grammar, including syntax (the structure of phrases, clauses, sentences, etc.);
- tenor (register) – especially the degree of formality or informality;
- the appropriateness of the language for purpose and audience;
- how the writers use language to show attitudes and viewpoints;
- how language is used to portray the romance and/or the reality of highwaymen;
- similarities and differences between the texts;
- any other points that you find of interest.

TEXT A (from the blurb on the back of a novel about Dick Turpin)

Your money or your life!
The dare-devil holdups...
The stirring adventures...
The most outrageous escapades...
 5 ***...of the most famous highwayman of them all.***
Dick Turpin is a brilliant ride and master swordsman whose belief in liberty and his own rough justice make him an outlaw in the perilous and corrupt world of 18th century England.
 10 ***With his old enemy, Captain Nathan Spiker, in pursuit, Turpin rides riotously for freedom on his beloved mare, Black Bess. But danger always travels with them – for capture means certain death.***

TEXT B (from *Paul Clifford*, by Bulwer Lytton)

As the trees rapidly disappeared behind them, the riders entered, at a hand gallop, on a broad tract of waste land interspersed with dykes and occasionally fences of hurdles, over which their horses bounded like quadrupeds well accustomed to such exploits.
 Certainly at that moment, what with the fresh air, the fitful moonlight now breaking broadly
 5 out, now lost in a rolling cloud, the exciting exercise, and that racy and dancing stir of the blood, which all action, whether evil or noble in its nature, raises in our veins; what with all this, we cannot but allow the fascination of that lawless life; – a fascination so great, that one of the most noted *gentlemen highwaymen* of the day, one too who had received an excellent education, and mixed in no inferior society, is reported to have said, when the rope was about his neck, and the
 10 good Ordinary* was exhorting him to repent of his ill-spent life, “*Ill-spent, you dog! –’Gad! (smacking his lips) it was delicious!*”
 “Fie! Fie! Mr.—, raise your thoughts to Heaven!”
 “But a canter across the common – oh!” muttered the criminal; and his soul cantered off to
 15 eternity.
 So briskly leaped the heart of the leader of the three, that as they now came in view of the main road, and the distant wheel of a carriage *whirred* on the ear, he threw up his right hand with a joyous gesture, and burst into a boyish exclamation of hilarity and delight.

*Ordinary: the chaplain of Newgate prison, who had to prepare condemned prisoners for death

TEXT C (from a review of a book about Dick Turpin)

Reproduced with kind permission of Kathryn Hughes.

5 In April 1739 a pock-marked butcher was hanged at York for crimes against His Majesty's Highways. Richard Turpin's death was just about the only thing in his shortish life that conformed to anyone's idea of how a highwayman was supposed to be. He smiled and swaggered, gave hatbands and other favours to the crowd, caused a delicious stir by presenting a gold ring to a married woman, and then threw himself off the hanging platform and "expired directly". In this last point he was lucky: most people kicked and spluttered for up to half an hour.

10 The preceding years had not been quite so full of noisy charm. Turpin's criminal career was scrappy, pragmatic, marked with bursts of panicked violence and careless boasts (his habit of showing off in pubs did for him on more than one occasion). The records are patchy, but with exemplary cunning, James Sharpe has tracked Turpin down to his Essex origins. Born in 1705, Turpin seems always to have been half-hearted about following his father into the family trade of butchering and inn-keeping. Instead, he preferred the easy pickings that came from terrorising the good citizens of Epping, Chingford and Woodford. As a member of the Gregory gang – a loose alliance of youngish men who found the respectable daily grind to which they had been born too slow and meagre – Turpin progressed from snaffling the odd deer to breaking and entering. Armed with guns, and primed for violence, the Gregory gang mounted a series of raids on substantial farmhouses in and around London, stuffing their pockets with other people's cash, jewellery and much-loved bits and pieces. Desecration seems to have been positively part of the thrill: what could not be carried off was burnt, drunk or raped.

20 Crime-fighting in the early 18th century has tended to be written off as bungling and corrupt, but Sharpe makes the important revisionist point that the Gregory gang was brought down with exemplary speed and efficiency. By the second half of 1735, all but two members had been hanged or were awaiting transportation to America. That left Turpin and a coin-clipper called Thomas Rowden, who now set about staging hold-ups on the main coaching roads that ran outwards from the capital. From familiar Mile End they moved to the easier banquet of Barnes, Richmond and Putney. Even now, though, Turpin was falling far short of the glamorous figure who would go down in history bearing his name. Instead of sprightly encounters with beautiful maidens on misty heaths, there were scrappy ambushes (usually exclusively male), mud, temper and, on one occasion, murder.

30 Most significant of all, says Sharpe, there is scarcely any evidence that Turpin ever owned a horse called Black Bess or that he undertook an epic dash from Essex to York to escape metropolitan justice. Instead he seems to have travelled north at his own pace, hoping to find a new field of endeavour for his criminal activities, which by now were centred on the distinctly mundane business of stealing other men's horses and passing them off as his own. To avoid any keen-eyed bounty hunters (there was now a massive £200 on his head), Turpin went by the name of John Palmer. Still, he could never resist showing off, and in the end it was his careless pub chat and fistfuls of cash that got people making connections. By February 1739, while locked up in York jail, John Palmer was identified as none other than Britain's most notorious criminal.

Or,

2. The following three texts are extracts from diaries.

Text A is from a diary entry for 19 August 1952 by Sylvia Plath (1932-1963), the American poet and novelist.

Text B is from a diary entry for 6 September 1939 by Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), the English novelist and essayist.

Text C is from a diary entry for 31 March 1980 by Alasdair Maclean, Scottish poet, born 1926. His diary, which was published alongside that of his father in *Night Falls in Ardnamurchan: The Twilight of a Crofting Family*, reflects the passing of a way of life.

Analyse and discuss the use of language in these texts.

Your answer should include exploration and analysis of some or all of the following:

- lexis;
- grammar, including syntax (the structure of phrases, clauses, sentences, etc.);
- tenor (register) – especially the degree of formality or informality;
- how the writers make use of the diary form;
- how the writers use language to convey thoughts, feelings, opinions, attitudes, etc.;
- similarities and differences between the texts;
- any other points that you find of interest.

TEXT A (from Sylvia Plath's diary entry for 19 August 1952)

Reproduced from the Journals of Sylvia Plath, Faber & Faber Ltd, 1982.

1 A.M. Face it kid, you've had a hell of a lot of good breaks. No Elizabeth Taylor, maybe. No child Hemingway, but god, you are growing up. In other words, you've come a long way from the ugly introvert you were only five years ago. Pats on the back in order? O.K., tan, tall, blondish, not half bad. And brains, 'intuitiveness' in one direction at least. You get along with a great many different
 5 kinds of people. Under the same roof, close living, even. You have no real worries about snobbishness, pride, or a swelled head. You are willing to work. Hard, too. You have willpower and are getting to be practical about living – and also you are getting published. So you got a good right to write all you want. Four acceptances in three months – \$500 *Mille*, \$25, \$10 *Seventeen*, \$4.50 *Christian Science Monitor* (from caviar to peanuts, I like it all the way).

TEXT B (from Virginia Woolf's diary entry for 6 September 1939. *Note:* Britain had declared itself at war with Germany on 3 September)

The Diaries of Virginia Woolf, published by Hogarth Press, used by kind permission of the Random House Group Ltd.

Our first air raid warning at 8.30 this morning. A warbling that gradually insinuates itself as I lay in bed. So dressed and walked on the terrace with L*. Sky clear. All cottages shut. Breakfast. All clear. During the interval a raid on Southwark. No news. The Hepworths came on Monday. Rather like a sea voyage. Forced conversation. Boredom. All meaning has run out of everything. Scarcely
 5 worth reading papers. The B.B.C. gives any news the day before. Emptiness. Inefficiency. I may as well record these things. My plan is to force my brain to work on Roger. But lord this is the worst of all my life's experience. It means feeling only bodily feelings: one gets cold and torpid. Endless interruptions. We have done the curtains. We have carried coals etc. in to the cottage for the 8 Battersea women and children. The expectant mothers are all quarrelling. Some went back yesterday. We took the car to be hooded, met Nessa, were driven to tea at Charleston. Yes, it's an empty meaningless world now. Am I a coward? Physically I expect I am. Going to London tomorrow I expect frightens me. At a pinch enough adrenalin is secreted to keep one calm. But my brain stops. I took up my watch this morning and then put it down. Lost. That kind of thing annoys me. No doubt one can conquer this. But my mind seems to curl up and become undecided. To cure
 10 this, one had better read a solid book like Tawney. An exercise of the muscles ... Shall I walk? Yes. It's the gnats and flies that settle on non-combatants. This war has begun in cold blood. One merely feels that the killing machine has to be set in action.

*L: Leonard, her husband

TEXT C (from Alasdair Maclean's diary entry for 31 March 1980)
Night Falls on Ardnamurchan by Alasdair Maclean, published by Berlinn.

5 Last night, in a house in Kilchoan, I watched, willy-nilly, a 'Highland' programme on television. I was trapped and could not well make my escape. All present but me enjoyed the programme thoroughly; all were Highlanders; all believed themselves to be watching something authentically native. The room was crowded and I was the only scowler there. I was a small oasis of gloom in a desert of delight.

10 The star performer on this programme was the celebrated Mr X, a singer of popular songs in a pseudo-Gaelic vein and a man, I assure you, more admired in these parts than was the great Maighstir Alasdair in his prime; when he sheltered from the redcoats in the caves of Arisaig, in the desolation that followed Culloden¹, with his pockets empty and the poetry bursting a hole in his mind. My solitary groan when he flashed into view was lost in a chorus of 'oohs' and 'ahs'. He was robed in the full Balmoral fig², the dress that never was on land or sea. He was Tailor-and-Cutter beautiful, an exquisite. O not a *sgian dhu*³ nor a grouse-foot brooch was out of place about him. His stockings were as unwrinkled as his brow. His hair reflected the studio lights as brightly as his toe-caps.

15 He sang and he glittered and he clutched his microphone to his mouth like a child with a lollipop. He swayed from the knees. He shimmered and he shimmied.

20 I thought of my grandfather, in the dungarees and the Burns-and-Laird Line guernsey⁴, the seaboots and the flat cloth cap of all his days. I remember him standing in the peat-bog, in the true Highlands, heaving the newly-cut sods up on to the bank, his palms plated with callouses, an old-master network of ingrained dirt. And round about him the reality of his life sucked and squelched...

My stomach turns. Away with all this tartanry, this obscure and irrelevant clutter of sporrans and gewgaws⁵! Whatever legitimacy it might have had – and it had precious little – has become so tainted a man must needs be lacking in pride and honour and a sense of the absurd to countenance it.

¹ A battle in 1745, when an army of Highlanders was defeated by an English redcoat army ² dress ³ a small knife ⁴ a thick woollen shirt worn by seamen ⁵ gaudy trifles/baubles