

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 9765/01
Poetry and Prose

Key Messages

- The best responses showed excellent knowledge of the texts, focused clearly on relevance to the question and tailored appropriate material with apt illustration.
- Good answers were planned so that their arguments were convincing and well-structured.
- Critical quotations need to be entirely relevant to the points being made, and in the best essays were incorporated into a fluent, well-structured argument.
- Good answers used appropriate contextual material relevant to the question, integrating it skillfully and avoiding biographical speculation.

General comments

Examination performance this year was generally very sound. Advice on improvement from previous Principal Examiner Reports and from Inset meetings had clearly been absorbed and transmitted to candidates. A resurgence of uptake on Chaucer, Pope, Austen, Hardy and Coetzee was noted, and only Browning and Walcott had no takers in this examination session.

Candidates showed impressive knowledge of their set texts on the whole, and some indicated that they had undertaken wider reading of other works by the writer in question. However, these were often less well known than the main texts and care needs to be taken if they are quoted to support an argument. For example, some candidates writing on Chaucer cited the *Prologue to The Canterbury Tales* and other of the 'Marriage Debate' group of Tales, but gave the impression that they had not really been read carefully: the Wife of Bath is not the only woman on the Pilgrimage, for example, a point often made; and it is hard to believe that candidates who had really read the Clerk's Tale would consider that patient Griselda represents the perfect wife. Other novels by Austen, Hardy and Eliot were sometimes used with less confidence and discernment than *Persuasion*, *The Return of the Native* and *The Mill on the Floss*. Wider reading should enhance the impression created, as it did in those answers which were secure in the knowledge of their supporting material.

Most answers were relevant, although moments of digression could be discerned at times, where, for example, excessive reliance on Egdon Heath or Plath's marriage threatened an essay's cohesion. On the whole candidates avoided these pitfalls and produced clearly focused arguments in answer to specific questions.

Critical reading is a valuable source of alternative views on texts, but quotations from critics need to be attributed if possible (there were many instances of 'some critics say that..') in successful essays, the focus was primarily on the set text and the candidate's personal response to it and analysis of it, with support from critical views, rather than critical views dominating the essay.

Candidates generally manage contextual comment very well on this paper. There were some impressively relevant uses of contextual material in essays on *Disgrace* for example, as on the Navy question in *Persuasion*. Appreciation of the social and cultural background to the Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale informed many answers helpfully, as did an understanding of Metaphysical poetry in answers to questions on Marvell. There were few superfluous paragraphs of undigested historical material.

Comments on specific questions

Section A POETRY

Question 1 *The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*

- (a) Chaucer was extremely popular this session and of the two alternatives this was the most widely attempted. Candidates enjoy discussion of the Wife and her marriages and there was a full range of responses. Work lower down the mark range tended to describe the marriages chronologically; more sophisticated responses discussed examples of 'maistrie' in both Prologue and Tale and paid attention to 'effects' as well as Chaucer's methods.

Some less successful answers quoted the first line of the Prologue (with its 4 words) as if it made sense on its own, when the full meaning of the clause demands the first three lines, as well as an understanding of the word 'auctoritee', which is not the same as the modern word 'authority':

*Experience, though noon auctoritee
Were in this world, is right ynogh for me
To speke of wo that is in mariage;*

Those answers which appreciated the Wife's attitude to the 'auctoritee' of the Bible and classical authorial sources - and her own use of authorities when it suits her - were able to start more confidently. More sophisticated answers showed a careful consideration of the Tale and its ambiguities. Detailed knowledge of the text is very important: some summaries of the marriage to Jankyn and its resolution were misleading.

Contextual appreciation of Chaucer's world suffered at times from simple generalisations about the position of women and their subjugation by men. Human nature and gender relations have always been complex. Describing the Wife as a 'feminist' or a 'megalomaniac' - these contemporary terms appeared in many essays - is never as fruitful as discussing the effects of the text itself, as those essays did which scored more highly.

- (b) The links between the Prologue and Tale were discussed in a number of essays, some of them excellent, focusing on common themes and language effects. The potential for discussion of how far there are links between the two provided useful ground for argument in many responses. The best answers were wide-ranging and resourceful.

Many candidates in answers to both a) and b) quoted critical commentaries on Chaucer (usually accurately and with attribution); however, these sometimes extreme views were sometimes offered as if they were incontrovertible facts. Often it would have been helpful to engage with the critical assertions offered and discuss their validity, a practice which helps to integrate critics' comments into a well-structured and cohesive argument.

Question 2 *Andrew Marvell: Selected Poems*

- (a) There were more answers on Marvell in this examination session. The most successful answers to this, the more popular alternative, chose apt poems for discussion, often beginning with the dialogue poems which employ the conflict of opposites as their structural basis. These were often copiously illustrated and well-discussed. The 'conflict of opposites' demands appropriate material for discussion and illustration. Some poem choices did not offer sufficient material to consider the proposition directly enough, and these answers struggled to present relevant, well illustrated arguments. *The Garden* is a case in point here: 2b) would have offered more relevant opportunities than 2a).
- (b) Fewer candidates answered this question and most, understandably, focused on *The Garden*. There were some thoughtful, sensitive answers.

Some essays used the much less appropriate *Horatian Ode* and so did less well. The importance of choice of apt material for the questions asked cannot be stressed too strongly.

Question 3 *The Rape of the Lock*

- (a) Pope answers were characterised by very close knowledge and appreciation of the text, in both alternatives. This was less popular than b) but answers employed impressively detailed close analysis to discuss Pope's exploration of contradictions.
- (b) Very good knowledge of the epic and mock-heroic features of the poem illuminated answers here. Most responses were detailed, clearly structured and appreciative.

Many good answers were seen which used a wealth of accurate illustration to support arguments.

Question 4 *Browning Selected Poems*

There were no answers on Browning.

Question 5 *Eliot: Selected Poems*

The Selected Poems, were, as in previous years, very popular. More appropriate poem choices were made by candidates this year and both alternatives produced thoughtful, imaginative and relevant responses. There were, at the top end, some impressively sophisticated answers. Answers were evenly divided between the two options.

- (a) Many candidates discussed both religious and mythological images, ranging widely and showing confident grasp of Christian and Greek mythology, The Fisher King, Buddhist and Hindu influences. The best answers were able to suggest the effects created by Eliot and showed appreciation of the multiplicity of his references and their interwoven effects. Contextual grasp of Modernism was also evident. Many candidates used Eliot's conversion thoughtfully, relating it to detailed analysis of the relevant poems.
- (b) Candidates wrote with great sensitivity on Prufrock, which was used in almost every essay, not surprisingly. Detailed quotations often supported the arguments offered. *Portrait of a Lady* was also a favourite choice, though some took the different voices of *The Waste Land* and used them to good effect. *Marina*, a poem which has hitherto been all but ignored, was analysed with appreciative perception.

Question 6 *Bishop: Selected Poems*

Bishop has never been a majority choice, but work on her poetry continues to impress with its thoughtful appreciation and attention to detailed analysis.

- (a) There were few a) answers, but almost all of them were sophisticated in argument. Answers were detailed and sensitive to Bishop's explorations of the self's fragility and alienation.
- (b) This was the more popular alternative, and answers were notable for appropriate poem choices and detailed consideration of form, structure and language. This was sensibly linked to an appropriate consideration of biographical context.

Question 7 *Plath: Ariel*

There was more work on Plath in this examination session and the standard was generally higher than in the past because answers focused more closely on the poetry and less on the life. There were still weaker answers which contained too much less relevant material speculating about Plath's marriage, but these were fewer than last year. The two questions were equally popular, though choice of suitable material was more obvious in answers to a)

- (a) Images of illness and death are easily discernible in this collection and many candidates wrote in detail about them. More sophisticated answers tried hard to consider their effects in the poems as a whole rather than listing of images, which was characteristic of less confident answers.

- (b) The best answers here were selective and resourceful, making their arguments compelling by close analysis of relevant material. Some candidates had difficulty identifying 'a sense of terror', so there were a number of unconvincing arguments with paragraphs ending 'this creates a sense of terror' when what has been discussed is quite different: a sense of love gone wrong or loneliness or self-awareness of a reflective kind, for example.

Question 8 Walcott: *Selected Poetry*

There were no answers on Walcott

Section B: PROSE

Question 9 Defoe: *Moll Flanders*

Only a few candidates attempted questions on Defoe. Close knowledge of the text was a determining factor in successful handling of both alternatives. The structural diffuseness of the narrative is a continuing challenge for essay structure.

- (a) This was the more popular alternative and those answers which had a wealth of examples of 'secrets and lies' to discuss were the most successful.
- (b) Few candidates were tempted by 'different settings' but these responses were usually very good.

Question 10 Austen: *Persuasion*

The novel was even more popular this year and most answers showed fine knowledge of the text and great appreciation for its subtleties.

- (a) Not as popular as alternative b), answers here tended towards the extremes of attainment: the very sophisticated which traced relationships carefully and related them to the novel's overall structure or occasionally those lower down the mark range which did not have much to say. The question asks for consideration of the Eliot family, not just Anne, and the best answers took careful account of this requirement. Some sophisticated answers saw Lady Russell as a somewhat ambiguous figure and there were a number of engaging discussions of her presentation and significance.
- (b) The Navy gave scope for answers at all levels and there were many well-supported and knowledgeable responses here. Fine detail of Navy personnel other than Wentworth often gave the opportunity for excellence, and the Crofts were frequently cited. However on occasion answers strayed from the Navy into consideration of the position of women or of marriage, sometimes as a result of considering the Crofts. Another danger was indulgence in too lengthy a discussion of the aristocratic class who are contrasted with the Navy in the novel, unbalancing the focus of the answer.

Question 11 Eliot: *The Mill on the Floss*

- (a) The most successful answers considered which 'social values' they were going to discuss – such as family loyalty or education - and managed a wide range of relevant material accordingly. However, the important subject of gender inequality often became exclusively a comment on Maggie and Tom and their different upbringing, with few other social values being considered. In less good essays these were limited further by exemplification from just some of their childhood experiences. Many answers were scornful of the Victorian social values explored by Eliot, but the most thoughtful were more even-handed, mindful of a social cohesion which can be supportive.
- (b) This essay alternative, less popular than a), nevertheless inspired some outstanding work. Mature appreciation of characterisation, of the structure of the novel, and of Eliot's varied styles, all with detailed textual support, gave full or almost full marks to a number of candidates.

Essays on Eliot illustrated the different ways in which 'context' can be employed in essays. In a), some knowledge of nineteenth century social values was clearly beneficial. These were relevant for b) too, but literary contexts such as tragedy and epic as well as some judiciously selected biographical material came into play in the second alternative.

Question 12 Hardy: *The Return of the Native*

There were many answers on the novel, evenly divided between the two alternatives.

- (a) This was often handled well, with better answers making excellent close links to the narrative development of the novel. Less good answers tended to focus on the characters individually or even on just one of the characters (usually Eustacia) at the expense of the relationship of the three. References to Fate and coincidence (the subject of alternative b) were also used skilfully here and a number of candidates referred to the myth of Oedipus in their discussion of Clym and his mother, a valuable literary context.
- (b) There were many thoughtful considerations of the place of Fate and coincidence in the novel. More sophisticated answers offered definitions and separated the two issues carefully. One of the more successful strategies was the argument that character is as important as 'Fate', so that although Fate is invoked by both the novelist and the characters, the novel would be much less engaging if the reader felt that everything was pre-destined: the relationship is more complex than that. These concepts are not straightforward, and some answers did become caught in contradictory entanglements; however their attempts to discuss and illustrate were always rewarded. There was once again a tendency to dwell on the Heath as a personification of Fate: an acceptable idea to pursue, but one which can easily take over the argument and lead to loss of focus.

Question 13 Wharton: *The Age of Innocence*

Far fewer candidates wrote on Wharton in this examination session. The alternatives were equally subscribed.

- (a) The best answers considered marriage in the novel and related their thoughts to the cynical definition given in the prompt quotation. There are a number of marriages depicted in the novel, not just that between Archer and May, and the status of marriage as an institution is frequently remarked upon, so there is much material from which to select. More modest answers tended to focus upon the main marriage and to ignore the prompt quotation.
- (b) The topic was handled confidently and there were some good answers considering the proposition in the prompt. New York and old Europe were considered as contrasting settings, but many essays focused on the characters of May and Ellen as symbolising the difference – a valid consideration, but in weaker answers it could become the sole focus of the essay, at the expense of other ideas.

Question 14 Lawrence: *The Rainbow*

After two years in which Lawrence was a minority option, there was a resurgence of uptake this year. The novel had generally been studied more thoroughly than in the past, resulting in a wider range of appropriate references.

- (a) This was the favourite option and candidates wrote interesting and thoughtful essays about the symbol of the rainbow, tracing it through the novel. One or two candidates argued strongly that it was not a suitable title for the novel, but their arguments were always well focused, so that the work remained relevant and well supported.
- (b) 'Domestic life' was not as popular, though there were thoughtful detailed considerations of this topic, mostly by way of the marriages in the novel. Marriage is of course connected with domestic life, but there are other aspects such as bringing up children, housework and family management generally, which could have added range to answers.

Question 15 Coetzee: *Disgrace*

Many candidates wrote on *Disgrace* and were evidently much engaged by it. Option a) was the more popular but there were some good answers to b) too. Candidates were nearly all familiar with the narrative position taken by the novelist and wrote well on this aspect of form, structure and language.

- (a) The 'problem' of sexual behaviour in the novel goes beyond Lurie and better answers were organised to discuss this. Some discussions hardly progressed beyond Lurie and Soraya and Melanie; on the other hand, there were many good thoughtful answers considering Lucy's rape and the contextual significance of inter-racial sexual relations in modern South African society. These broader visions of the novel's exploration of sexual behaviour successfully related Lurie's predatory advances to Melanie with Lucy's rape, within the context of South African race relations. Contextual knowledge was impressive and used relevantly.
- (b) Fewer candidates tackled symbolism and answers tended to the extremes of the mark range: the majority were well prepared and had a range of symbols to discuss: animals and literary figures featuring highly; a few more modest answers perhaps were not quite clear what symbolism is and had fewer examples, relying on general discussion of character. A character can also be a symbol, but a major character with complex thoughts and feelings is less likely to be so in his entirety; answers which argued that Lurie is symbolic needed to be specific: his attitude to Soraya could symbolise the dominant white male of the old South Africa, for example.

Question 16 Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway*

Woolf remains very popular, and there was a full range of attainment here, from the slightly out of focus to the sharply perceptive. Most candidates answered a), though the b) responses were often of a very high standard. Candidates have clear appreciation of the context of the post-war world and Modernism, as well as Woolf's distinctive narrative techniques.

- (a) The 'contrasts of youth and age' became a discussion of Time in the novel for some candidates, with the consequence that some of their points were slightly out of focus, an answer to another essay. Those who concentrated precisely on the topic took young characters and older characters but also considered the younger and older selves of Clarissa, Peter and Sally and the contrasts between them. However, discussion of Memory could become over-lengthy, to the detriment of the essay structure. The best answers used the text in great detail and some apt quotations on the subject were used to great advantage (Miss Kilman's reflections on the young Elizabeth, for example, or Peter's on the young soldiers. Surprisingly few candidates mentioned Septimus. Youth is not always a time for carefree freedom.
- (b) A few very good answers were seen here. Essays were characterised by a range of ideas and a wealth of useful illustrations.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 9765/02

Drama

Key Messages

- Candidates need to be fully briefed about the requirements for the paper and must answer on at least one passage-based **(b)** question.
- Success in passage-based questions depends upon candidates having a close knowledge of detail and on making the passage the central focus of the essay.

General comments

For many candidates, this paper offers an opportunity to range widely and to think about texts as both something to be read and something to be seen in theatrical terms. The strongest answers dealt with the texts in detail, moving from minute analysis to wider arguments with ease and conviction, whilst also showing an acute awareness of how the texts might be variously interpreted. Weaker answers tended towards a more general approach, moving from point to point without really having a coherent, overall sense of direction.

At the bottom end of the mark range, responses to text were often patchy, with elements of the text slightly misunderstood. There were also examples of answers where discussion of contexts or critics was at the expense of detailed analysis of the texts and the candidates' own personal response. Better answers showed stronger personal response and a willingness to argue a case based firmly on the text, though there was sometimes a tendency towards summary and paraphrase. Candidates in the top bands produced work that offered real illumination into the texts. Ideas were logically organised and coherently expressed, with exploration of form, structure and language anchored firmly in personal response, married to understanding of suitable backgrounds and contexts

Comments on specific questions

Shakespeare: *Coriolanus*

Question 1

There were only a small number of responses to this text.

- (a) Most candidates were able to explore dramatic presentation to some extent, often using class structure or different characters' points of view in order to demonstrate that Rome and its values are complexly created in this play. Better answers looked at the distribution of power and the ideas about democracy expressed here. Valour, honour, and Coriolanus as a product of the city and its patrician values, also proved useful ways of focusing the question.
- (b) Essays here often did not focus closely enough on the detail of the passage provided. A general view of Coriolanus's exile was not the central focus of the question, though wider reference to the later action was, of course, relevant. Responses that were able to focus on his intransigence at this point or on his self-dramatizing vision of himself as wronged victim ('like a lonely dragon') found plenty to talk about in the passage. At times, responses drew attention to features ('common men' or 'A noble cunning') without really explaining their significance within the context of the speech.

Shakespeare: *As You Like It*

Question 2

- (a) There were no answers to this question.
- (b) There were no answers to this question.

Shakespeare: *King Lear*

Question 3

- (a) Many responses were confident about the relationship between the two plots in *King Lear*, though less satisfactory answers often just listed parallels between ungrateful or grateful sons and daughters. In doing so, there was often a significant amount of paraphrase or summary, which can never score highly. At times, too, some responses lost sight of the question and focused too much on Lear. Better answers were able to see how the plots feed off each other and are intimately intertwined in order to create complex patterns of sympathy and to universalise the situation. The best answers were able to see that there is a metaphorical link between the two plots, often focusing on the blindness of Gloucester as a way into understanding Lear's condition or on issues of trickery or injustice. Stronger answers also focused clearly on particular moments and were able to discuss language and dramatic effects in detail. Contexts and critics were often usefully evoked, though some moved too easily to speculation about what a contemporary audience might have thought, or to Shakespeare's source material, a matter of only tangential significance.
- (b) Responses to this question varied widely. Some saw the passage as an opportunity for wide discussion, paying little attention to detail from the passage. Some answers, despite the clue in the question, focused almost entirely on Lear and paid little attention to the role of Kent, who is much more than a sounding board for Lear. The same can be said of the Fool. Some answers diverted themselves into a discussion of his role in the play as a whole; others ignored his role as a wise commentator, with only a minority seeing the significance of his song. Some answers used the passage as a way into discussing the role of fate and the gods in the play, and this often took focus away from detailed analysis – a shame, as there was so much to talk about presented here in terms of the play's wider issues. Some answers turned into a general essay on Lear as 'a man more sinn'd against than sinning'. Better answers looked closely at the language and were able to see this moment as a significant step on Lear's journey towards self-knowledge. Contexts and critics were often adeptly used - in order to be of use, critics' views need to be integrated into a candidate's own arguments to support, deepen or further the case being made. Discussions about metaphorical storms and tension between the micro and the macrocosm were often fruitful, but only if they emerged from detail such as Kent's vivid description of the storm (lines 9-12) married to his subsequent comment that 'Man's nature cannot carry/ Th'affliction nor the fear.'

Shakespeare: *The Tempest*

Question 4

- (a) A small number of responses saw this question entirely in terms of character study. More subtle answers were able to discuss Caliban's dramatic significance to the pattern of the whole play. At the top end, there were some excellent expositions of Caliban's use of language, with candidates arguing strongly that Caliban's public face of savagery ('I know how to curse') is interrogated by his use of some of the most beautiful poetry in the play elsewhere ('Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises'). Other answers looked at Caliban as a victim of others' desires to exploit and his own willingness to accept this. There were also discussions of parallels between Caliban and Ferdinand, not always in Ferdinand's favour. A small number of very good responses engaged with Prospero's opinion by suggesting that Prospero's view is an unloading of a cultural agenda that is criticised by the action of the play, thus seeing the question as being as much about Prospero as Caliban. In broadening out discussions, responses often invoked relevant contexts of colonialism and ideas about noble savages and Montaigne. A number of responses discussed recent productions, often to good effect.

- (b) Candidates obviously had strong views about the significance of Ferdinand and Miranda and their function in the play as a whole. Some answers made this their central focus, paying little attention to the passage presented. These were in the minority. Further up the mark scale, there were interesting discussions of how Ferdinand and Miranda interact at this point, with clear contrasts made between Miranda's simplicity of both language (her self announced 'prattle') and attitude and Ferdinand's slightly pompous view of himself as a courtly lover, with his over-blown language and compliments ((lines 32-42) and his alluring chat-up line 'I am in my condition/ A prince... I do think a king.' Other discussions focused on Ferdinand's willingness to work, comparing often to Caliban's view of the same task. The role of Prospero as both observer and manipulator was soundly caught in many responses, with some moving on to wonder about the self-determination of the two within a world dictated by a higher authority. Wider issues raised often centred on the pair as the symbol of reconciliation, on discussions of power and authority, or on attitudes towards Miranda's purity. In general, the closer answers got to the detail of the passage, the better they did.

Webster: *The White Devil*

Question 5

- (a) There were a small number of answers on this question. Responses were able to range widely across the play and to see a variety of different sorts of abuses of justice at work. There was, as may be expected, much focus on the arraignment of Vittoria. More sophisticated answers attempted to tease out ideas about what justice might look like in a world where there are no moral certainties. One or two responses tried at ideas about divine justice as the action of framing the play, but there was little evidence adduced to demonstrate that this idea is presented as a real possibility. More could perhaps have made of the play's lack of resolution at the end, its sense that the action has ended without the issues raised having been solved in any very convincing way.
- (b) In replying to this question, most answers were able to examine the peculiarities of the scene, noting that Vittoria and Flamineo take on attitudes of tragic heroism (catch the echo of *Antony and Cleopatra* in line 1) which their behaviour earlier in the play would not lead us to expect. The sense of intimacy between the two was well caught by some of the candidates. There was much coherent discussion of the quality of the imagery in the passage, particularly that concerning boats, shipwrecks and drownings. Few were able to capture the rather more difficult elements of farce and black humour of the scene. Candidates who were less comfortable with the detail often wanted to write more widely about elements of revenge or wild justice in the play as a whole and these were not always successful. Discussion of other examples of revenge drama contributed to many candidates' responses and there was often sensible reference to a small range of critics.

Wycherley: *The Country Wife*

Question 6

- (a) There were only a very small number of responses to this question. They were almost always at the top end of the range and were able to show how the comedy of the play leads into quite serious yet satirical examination of human nature, sexual appetite, social reputation and duplicitousness. The best answers did so with great delicacy, anchoring perceptions to the farcical devices and to the verbal energy of much of the play's action. Contexts were often well considered, with strong awareness of the importance of stage 'business' in the presentation of such plays. References to Moliere, though sometimes apposite and well explained, often came across as background rather than as connections that would illuminate the central text more brightly.
- (b) Most answers showed a good awareness of the relationship between the Pinchwife couple and the tensions between them. There was also sound understanding of the ways in which the apparently simple life of the country and the sophistication of the city is focused through their relationship. Less convincing was the treatment of the detail of this particular episode, where Mrs Pinchwife shows herself to be far worldlier and more manipulative than her husband imagines. What proved most elusive, however, was the fact that she thinks herself more knowing than she actually is because she believes that Mr Horner's affection for her is real. Some candidates took a very serious view of Mr Pinchwife's threats of violence and failed to see the humour of the stage business here.

Pinter: *The Room* and *The Dumb Waiter*

Question 7

- (a) Candidates seemed to very much enjoy this question. They were able to range widely across the texts and there were significant numbers of highly original responses. The implicit threat of violence in both plays, or the establishment of power through pauses and silence were amongst the most obvious areas for discussion. But there were also powerful answers that talked about setting or external events (or the threat of them) as a source of tension. The best answers used the text with great subtlety, moving from briefly quoted specifics to larger discussion with ease. Answers much lower down tended to focus on the more obvious aspects of the question. Critics were often used discriminatingly, and there were some sound responses that evoked particular productions that had been seen. Many candidates used their background reading to advantage, and there were frequent references to other plays by Pinter.
- (b) This was probably the most popular question on the paper. Candidates were quick to respond to issues of power as presented here, with silence and verbosity carefully opposed. Rose's obsession with trivia and her perpetual fidgeting were also highlighted as a means of emphasising the dramatic in the scene. Connections with the rest of the play were often acutely made, with candidates often arguing that Bert's silence is more than passive aggression and more a concealment for the violence that we see later, so beautifully prepared for by Rose's casual and idiomatic 'It's murder'. Some saw the passage simply as a means of moving into general discussion of the two plays; others took the opposite approach and did not make sustained connections with *The Dumb Waiter*. The best of responses saw parallels between both plays in terms of language, theme or situation. In trying to reach out to contexts, there were often discussions about the domestication of women in the 1950s; slightly more tendentially, some candidates saw the play as a metaphor for the Cold War or as Pinter's gloss on post-war immigration because of Rose's concern with 'foreigners' and the basement.

Friel: *Dancing at Lughnasa*

Question 8

- (a) There were a number of interesting responses to this question. Candidates were acutely aware of the ambiguity of Michael as he both re-lives the times and also comments upon them from the perspective of the present. This often led into clear and vivid discussion of the play's structure and dramatic effects. Better responses were able to engage with ideas about nostalgia (the soft, golden light of the final tableau) and the accuracy of memory. There were sensible discussions too about how Michael's commentaries benefit from hindsight about what happened to his mother and aunts. Contexts were often usefully evoked, and candidates showed a willingness to engage with critics as a means to support and forward their own arguments about the text.
- (b) Some responses simply wrote about the role of Jack in the play as a whole. Better answers focused clearly on the detail of the passage, making points about memory, identity and language. Jack's familiarity with pagan rituals was sometimes paralleled with the Lughnasa festival. Responses often saw Jack's presence as challenging Irish Catholic culture and narrow-mindedness, particularly in exchanges between Kate and Jack. Many answers used Michael's child-like view of Jack's exoticism as a means of focusing attention on his currently degraded state. The best answers were able to comment closely on Jack's situation at this particular moment as he struggles to re-adjust to Ireland and come to terms with a language that no longer expresses his experiences. Contexts were generally soundly adduced. At times, less convincing responses were keen to demonstrate understanding of issues of identity or of the play as a 'memory play' without offering clear support from the text itself.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 9765/03

Comment and Analysis

Key messages

Successful answers:

- began with a statement of the approach to be taken
- took into account the genre of the passage
- always referred to the detail of the text in making a point, supporting their ideas with analysis
- wove contextual points into the argument, relating them to specific points or ideas from the text.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

All candidates could see differences in outlook between these texts and the best answers were able to analyse the means by which these differences were expressed. Some went further, and wrote well about the ironies they saw in **(A)**, analysing Cavendish's praises of men's heroic labours in the service of women as deflating, and arguing convincingly that the writers had similar viewpoints on the subject.

A considerable number of scripts started by describing both texts as poems; in some cases this was a slip redeemed by the rest of the essay, but in a few cases there was an attempt to analyse **(A)** as verse. In order to score highly, answers do need to take into account the genre of the passage(s) analysed and it is advisable for candidates to pause and consider this before writing. There was some astute reading of the title of **(A)** and the opening references to preceding orations. This approach usually included the deduction that this piece was part of a formal colloquy, which led to some useful work on tone, often based on an examination of the structure and punctuation of the long opening sentence. Others commented on the length of this sentence without drawing any critical conclusions about it, and a few dismissed it as clumsy. Candidates who saw a significance in it were able to analyse the structure of the whole piece, and were usually able to integrate brief and effective contextual points into their argument. They also analysed the Chudleigh poem by relating form to content, and comparing the hyperbole with that in **(A)**. Some answers included a sensitive comparison of the anguished tone of the last four lines in **(B)** with the more formal measured argument and conclusion in **(A)**. The technicalities of **(B)** were generally well handled, and related to the development of the ideas within the poem.

There was comparison of various aspects of the texts at all levels of achievement, some candidates taking a carefully economical approach and restricting themselves to a detailed analysis of a few aspects and some covering more ground in less detail. The best answers made their direction clear at the start and moved effortlessly between the texts, integrating analysis and context. They went beyond discussion of the arguments visible in the pieces and explained their views by detailed reference to form, structure and language.

Question 2

This was a popular option, and many candidates wrote sensitively about Wilbur's perspectives as a writer himself and as a father. Most saw the possibilities of the episode with the trapped starling and the effects of the nautical references. Able candidates made effective and economical reference to the modernist characteristics of the poem, thereby including apt contextual references, and accompanied this with sustained and sensitive analysis of the tensions in the poem as the daughter wrestles with her story. Some based their answers on suggestions of the author's putative experiences in the Second World War; others did not refer to the war but made interesting comments on conflict within the author's lifetime, and the violence and exhaustion of the bird's experiences, and developed this into comment on the daughter's circumstances as she begins to make her way in the world. Less successful answers often focused on the relationship but with little analysis of the form, structure and language on which they based their perceptions.

There was much useful consideration of effects of the stanza form, of the shifts in time and tense, and of the subtle enjambement found throughout the poem. Candidates clearly enjoyed analysing in detail the weighty journey by sea, the cargo, the prow, the gunwale, the starling and sill of the world being reached. Many candidates were at ease with modernist notions of the individual and stream of consciousness, and wrote well about the agonised hope of the parent figure as he observes from a distance, unable to help his daughter further.

There was also some good speculative writing on the identity of the 'Writer' (the girl, Wilbur, all writers) and on the processes of writing made visible in the poem.

Few candidates covered all this, but almost all touched fruitfully on at least some of it, and those who concentrated on elucidating the story often moved on to accounting for it at some level in their examination of form, structure and language.

Question 3

This was the less popular choice, but it was noticeable that those who opted for it were at ease with the genre, and some of them gained a higher mark than in their first answer. They seemed to enjoy the qualities of drama, just as those who chose **Question 2** enjoyed the qualities of poetry. There was some very subtle perception visible as candidates wrote of dramatic effects produced by song, action, and the development of character through dialogue. Some candidates wrote interestingly about the qualities of melodrama encountered in the extract, and included an assessment of the effects of the audience's knowledge of Gnatbrain's invisible presence in the latter part of the extract. The fact that this was the opening to a scene enabled many to write about ways in which the extract could set up future conflicts (the declared antipathy between Gnatbrain and Doggrass, for instance, including Gnatbrain's comparing himself to an alligator). This led to some successful work on relating part to whole.

There was some thoughtful writing on the means by which humour and harshness are constructed in the play, and some detailed analysis of the equivocal presentation of character – e.g. those aspects of Dolly Mayflower that are neither doll-like nor flower-like - and many candidates showed great perception of what an audience might gain from they were hearing and seeing.

Some candidates wrote perceptively about Susan and Doggrass as stock characters – the vulnerable lonely woman whose husband is away at sea and the grasping heartless landlord prepared to evict his own family - and there was some helpful reference to the context of the 1820s and of Romanticism. One or two answers contained helpful passing reference to aspects of Dickens; others made similar useful contextual references, slightly undermined by thinking the play was written in Victorian times.

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 9765/04
Personal Investigation

Key Messages

The best answers:

- were as individual and personal as possible in respect of both texts and topic;
- had followed the advice offered by CIE in response to the candidates' Outline Proposal Forms;
- considered in some detail the effects created by form, structure and language, whichever the genre of each text;
- ensured that there was sufficient reference to, and quotation from, the two or more subsidiary texts as well as the two main ones.

General Comments

The general standard of work seen this year was good, often very good, and not infrequently sophisticated and scholarly. All candidates had clearly undertaken careful reading, both of their chosen texts and of some background and critical material, and the most successful interwove discussion of these texts and materials in fluent and integrated writing, showing a full grasp of what they were saying, and demonstrating a confident appreciation of what the Syllabus and Assessment Objectives require. Above all, they also showed a real love of literature, and an enjoyment in writing about it.

Key Assessment Objectives

The first Assessment Objective requires that candidates demonstrate knowledge of their texts. In much of the work seen this year candidates wrote about them clearly, cogently and accurately, supporting points with appropriate textual reference and quotation; used appropriate critical terminology, and with evidence of carefully considered personal response to the texts and the topic. Good work was well focused, with an argument that was clear at all times, and did not lose sight of the topic being discussed; the Pre-U Teacher Guide has a very useful short paragraph about constructing an essay, saying this: "Candidates should constantly ask themselves whether an examiner would be able to deduce *from each and every paragraph of the essay* exactly what the task is that they are attempting" (p21, The Writing Process). This is helpful advice for candidates.

The expectation is that the two main texts will receive approximately equal time and consideration, and, for higher level marks, that the essay will move fluently and frequently between them. Essays that scored highly displayed a similar balance between the subsidiary texts; these did not take up the same amount of time as the main ones, but there was enough to demonstrate that they had been read in full; essays which referred to only one subsidiary text, or only made a passing reference to both, did not score high marks.

The second Assessment Objective looks for discussion of the effects of structure, form and language, and how writers use these three factors in shaping their meanings, and their readers' or audiences' responses. Good work included confident detailed exploration of at least a short extract, or perhaps of a single poem or short scene from a play, used to illustrate the wider general stylistic characteristics and effects of a text, and also fulfil the requirement to see the whole in the part. Good work took into account the genre of the text. In relation to drama texts, essays scored less well when candidates wrote about drama as if it were simply another form of prose. Good essays on drama considered dramatic devices and effects.

Assessment Objective 3 has a number of strands. The first and most important has already been touched on in relation to the ways in which an argument is constructed, and how texts are connected. The changing words of the Level Descriptors are particularly helpful here, moving from the simple "give *some consideration, which may be narrowly conceived, to the presence of connections between the texts*" (Level

2), through the more demanding “*draws relevant comparisons/connections between the texts*” (Level 4) to the sophisticated “*makes illuminating comparisons between the texts*” (Level 6). In high scoring essays the texts – ideally all four, not just the main two – were drawn together throughout the essay; candidates bringing them together immediately in their opening paragraphs, and in their conclusions, at the same time keeping them all in mind throughout, rather than writing about each separately.

Also required by **AO3** is some consideration of other material that has been researched during the personal investigation; this material included alternative critical views and interpretations, together with the outcome of other relevant academic research into and around the texts. Good essays considered other critical positions and actively engaged with them, the best work using them as a means of working towards individual judgements, whereas less good work just quoted or asserted.

The fourth Assessment Objective looks for consideration of some contextual factors, which may include literary, social, historical, cultural, biographical material and information. Work towards the bottom of the mark range included simple evidence of knowledge of such factors, but work that scored more highly considered how in the candidates’ view these were relevant to a reading of the texts. The best work considered the *significance* of such factors and discussion of context was integrated into the whole argument.

Outline Proposals

Candidates who did well had followed the process of submitting an Outline Proposal Form (OPF) and taking notice of any feedback from CIE before they started work. A few candidates did much less well who had not followed the process or heeded comment, and therefore this section goes into some detail on this aspect of the course.

Candidates are required to submit an individual OPF by 31 October in the year preceding the examination, partly to clarify in their own minds exactly what they will be doing, but also so that CIE examiners can check and approve their texts and questions before work begins. Candidates who did well had used suitable texts. Texts need to be originally written in English, be literary rather than critical, and not on the set text lists for Papers 1 and 2. Centres will want to ensure that texts selected offer sufficient challenge and scope for investigation and analysis, while being accessible and engaging, so the choice of texts should be a negotiated one with teachers guiding candidates towards the choices that will serve them best.

The proposal offers two main texts, by two different writers, and at least two subsidiary texts, which should ideally but not necessarily be by different authors from the main ones and from each other

Candidates need an individual task and title, and candidates do best who have the most individual approach. Centres where all candidates propose entirely different texts are understandably very rare, but a helpful compromise is perhaps for all to work to a similar topic, with one common over-arching period or area, candidates choosing texts from a list offered by teachers.

The questions proposed must reflect a real individuality, and not just a slight variation on a theme that is common to others in the Centre. CIE will also comment on the wording of the proposed question itself, and candidates are strongly advised to take note of what is said here. The question itself must contain the *idea*, if not the word, of comparison, in order to fulfil the syllabus requirement that the essay must involve significant comparisons between two authors. Essays did well when they had a title that focused on comparison and on discussing the texts in literary terms with a clear focus and argument in view.

Word length and presentation

Essays are required to be between 3000 and 3500 words long. These limits are intended to help candidates ensure that they say enough about all four texts and that they write with reasonable conciseness and focus. Footnotes should be used for acknowledging the source of a quotation or reference made in the body of the essay, or perhaps very occasionally for making a brief additional comment. They should not be used for writing extensive additional material which should have formed part of the main argument, and if this is the case then examiners will have to take them into account when considering whether an essay is seriously over-long- but also, the essay will not flow well if footnotes are misused in this manner. All quotations from secondary sources must be properly acknowledged, but there is no need to make footnoted page references to every quotation from the main or subsidiary texts. Bibliographies – and where appropriate webographies – must be full and complete, and it is helpful if they can be in two parts: one part listing the sources that have been cited and/or quoted in the essay, and the second part listing additional publications and websites that

have been consulted but not actually mentioned. There is no regulation house-style for bibliographies, but candidates should certainly indicate the title and writer of each text, together with publisher and date of publication, and the ISBN number where appropriate. Website addresses should be given in full, together with the date on which they were last accessed.

Finally, a copy of the approved OPF should be attached to the work itself when submitted to CIE by April 30th in the year of examination.