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Examiners' report

ENGLISH LITERATURE

H072
For first teaching in 2015

H072/01 Summer 2018 series

Version 1

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PMT

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper H072/01 series overview

As with previous series, the most successful candidates were those who were most clearly intimately familiar with the texts they have studied, were prepared to discuss them in analytical detail, and when required were able think freshly about them in the light of the question. Both the Shakespeare and Poetry questions carry a high AO2 weighting, and candidates who do not to get down to specifics regarding how writers use techniques to create effects are not giving themselves the best chance of high marks. This is particularly challenging in the Shakespeare question where candidates do not have the text in the examination room; however, some candidates were able to discuss Shakespeare's linguistic and structural methods with sophistication and nuance. Lower ability responses lapsed into plot recount, and these essays became very general in nature.

Perhaps reflecting the high AO2 weighting on both sections, candidates were often very keen to use literary and linguistic terminology. When done well this gave a real clarity and precision to analysis. However, a basic point made using terminology is still a basic point. An example one examiner noted was typical of a rather unsubtle use of AO2 which was much seen:

> *'The transitive dynamic verb "kiss" conveys Caliban's admiration for Stephano.'*

In this example, the fact that 'kiss' is a verb is probably not the most interesting thing to say about Caliban's repeated offer to Stephano, 'I will kiss thy foot'. This kind of insistent attention to word classes was often not particularly helpful in showing understanding of writers' effects, and in some cases the word class was incorrectly identified.

Examiners have noted a few areas where written expression (AO1) was awkward or sometimes inaccurate. Specific examples that were much seen included the redundant preposition 'of' in phrases such as 'The play of *The Tempest*' and a high number of references to poems in Section 2 as 'plays'. It's also worth reminding candidates that a word can 'connote' or have 'connotations of' something, but cannot have 'connotations to' or 'connote to' something. While such slips alone certainly do not lead a response to a low mark, they can, in some cases, detract from the thrust of the argument or analysis.

Most responses were well-structured and focused, with effective paragraphing. This was especially true of Section 1, where candidates made good use of the AO5 prompt quotation in the question as the basis of their argument. The 'deflected response' which has been noted in previous series was not much in evidence this time. Sometimes very lengthy work would have benefited from more detailed planning before beginning on the answer. In terms of developing a clear structure (AO1), the paragraph opener 'Another way in which writer x presents theme y', especially if used several times in an essay, usually suggests a 'listing' approach to the answer rather than a developed cohesive argument. In approaching Section 2 candidates are encouraged to be discriminating in the evidence they use from the set poem to support their points, considering they do not have time to perform a 'line-by-line' analysis and also make links to the wider poem/collection. A large number of responses, particularly to the Rossetti, were insistently chronological in approach to the poem/passage given.

AO5 in Section 1 was often greatly enhanced by detailed reference to theatrical and cinematic versions, with a real sense of these plays being experienced, not just studied. Named critics (AO5) are most effectively integrated into arguments when what they say is tested against the text itself. There was a tendency to take a critical view on an issue as the end of the debate, leading to arguments broadly akin to 'critic x says "Angelo is actually a victim in *Measure for Measure*", so therefore Angelo can't be considered "unpleasant".' A more fruitful course of action might be to discuss how far the text itself, in the candidate's view, supports this critical view of Angelo.

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It should be noted that context (AO3) is 'light touch' on this paper, worth 10% of marks for each question. In the light of this, long digressive contextual discussions are unlikely to help an answer maintain its focus. There were still a relatively large number of historical misnomers, with the use of 'Victorian' to mean 'any historical period before the current one' being noted by many examiners. The best answers used context as a way of deepening their analysis of the text itself, for example linking the frequent olfactory images in *Paradise Lost* to Milton's blindness. Students are clearly being encouraged to consider the contexts of reception for texts and how these may change over time – with one examiner noting this nicely tentative example from a response on Rossetti:

> *"Rossetti's freedom may have made a Victorian reader sympathetic towards her as she was never able to fulfil the role of a Victorian woman by becoming a wife and mother, however a modern reader may admire her for putting her religion first and choosing not to marry and they may see her as an empowered woman."*

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Section 1 overview

Overall there was a pleasing sense that candidates were engaging with Shakespeare's work in a personal way. Considering the closed-book nature of this section of the examination there was impressive evidence of close textual knowledge on display in the majority of answers. As one examiner noted:

> Able candidates show us that conventional quotation plus comment is not necessary to show familiarity with a text, for example:
>
> *"By the time (Ophelia) appears in the flower scene, Polonius has died, Laertes is, to her knowledge, in France, and Hamlet has been sent to England. As such all three watchmen of her chastity are absent."*

As noted in earlier series, candidates are advised to be somewhat tentative in the assumptions they make about Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences. As one examiner noted:

> Elizabethans and Jacobeans may have lived in a more patriarchal society than our own, but ideas such as *'Angelo's attempt to rape Isabella would not have been seen as hypocritical by a Jacobean audience'* or *'An Elizabethan audience would not have seen Hamlet's behaviour towards Ophelia as wrong'* are not helpful or accurate.

The structure of the questions in Section 1 helps facilitate candidates' AO5 response through the prompt critical quotation given. Many candidates made excellent use of these quotations, with their answers having a sense of fresh thinking about the play in the light of it. 'Deflected' responses were not common, but were still to be found, particularly in *Hamlet* answers, with one examiner commenting, 'essays on revenge in *Hamlet* appeared a few times, with limited attempts to link revenge to the qualities of an effective king.'

Question 1 (a)

1 ***Coriolanus***

Either

(a) 'The most significant confrontation in the play *Coriolanus* is between the people of Rome and their patrician masters.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the play? **[30]**

Responses to *Coriolanus* were extremely rare; however, some highly impressive work was seen. This was the slightly more popular question. The small number of responses seen on this question generally showed a very secure sense of context, such as Roman notions of honour, and showed strong textual awareness, for example in critically supporting arguments which demonstrated both the people's often rather mercurial attitudes and Coriolanus' contemptuous view of 'the rabble'.

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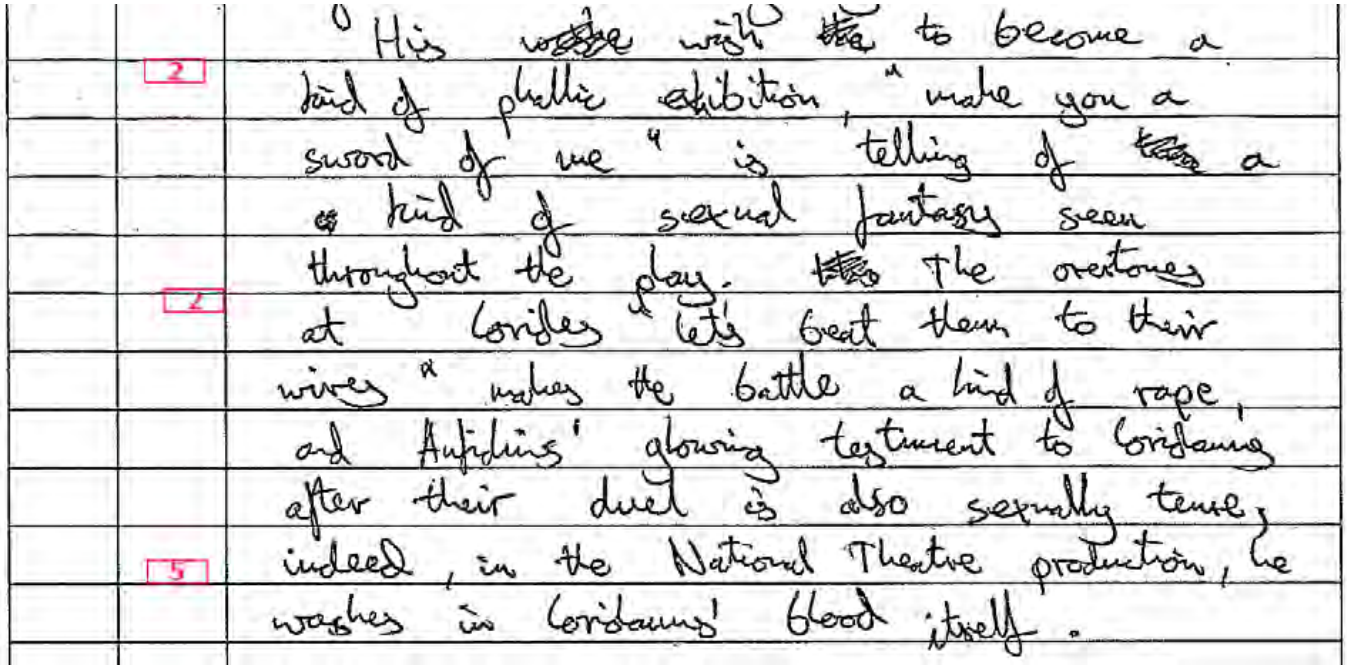
Question 1 (b)

(b) 'Coriolanus respects no man except his deadliest rival Tullus Aufidius.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the relationship between Tullus Aufidius and Coriolanus? **[30]**

A very little-tackled question. The script extract below discussing potential homoerotic aspects of the relationship between Coriolanus and Tullus Aufidius cogently (AO1) moves from precise consideration of methods (AO2) to consideration of the play in performance (AO5). It is a very good example of how AOs can be integrated into a fluent argument.

Exemplar 1



"His wife wish to become a kind of phallic exhibition, "make you a sword of me" is telling of a kind of sexual fantasy seen throughout the play. The overtones at Corioles "let's beat them to their wives" makes the battle a kind of rape, and Aufidius' glowing testiment to Coriolanus after their duel is also sexually tense, indeed, in the National Theatre production, he washes in Coriolanus' blood itself.

Question 2 (a)

2 ***Hamlet***

Either

(a) 'The play *Hamlet* explores what it takes to be an effective King.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the play *Hamlet*? **[30]**

The slightly less popular question on by far the most popular Shakespeare text option. Most candidates found this question accessible and developed well-supported arguments (AO1) that typically offered a 'survey' approach which considered different models of kingship in the play (Old Hamlet, Fortinbras, Claudius) and compared them with the theoretical kingship of Hamlet himself. In terms of context (AO3), a number of candidates saw the play as a direct response to King James; however, the very latest possible date for *Hamlet* is 1602, making it a late-Elizabethan play. Many candidates effectively made the case for Claudius being a rather effective king in terms of his diplomatic and rhetorical skills. One candidate memorably made the case for Claudius being a kind of decisive 'CEO' who is 'turning round' a failing 'rotten' state.

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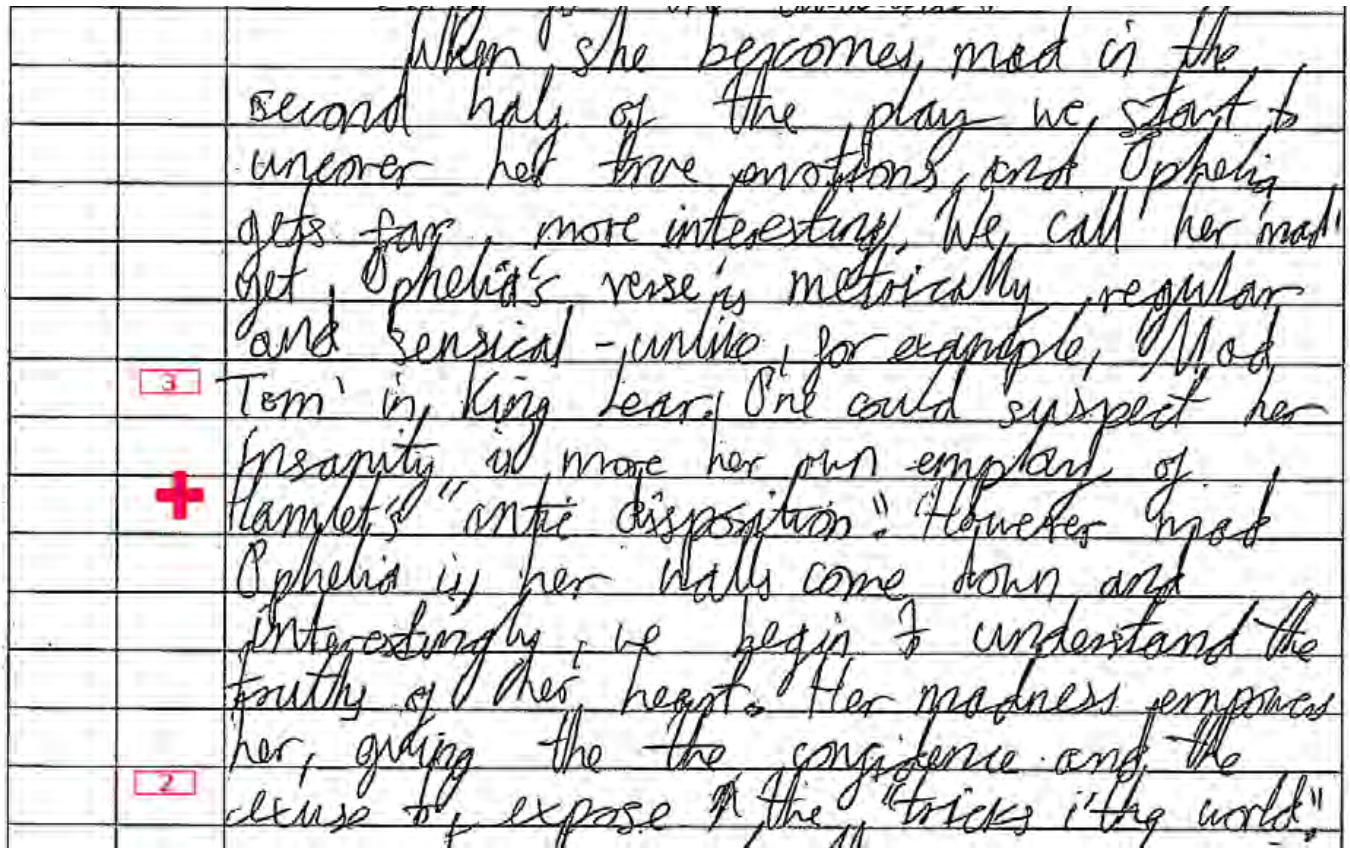
Question 2 (b)

(b) 'Ophelia's madness is more interesting to the audience than her sanity.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the role of Ophelia in the play *Hamlet*? **[30]**

A very much-seen response. Clearly many candidates were pleased to see a question on Ophelia. A good number of candidates felt, challenging the question, that in sanity there was actually much that was interesting about Ophelia's character in terms of what it reveals about Elizabethan attitudes to gender, although some of these contextual points (AO3) were rather sweeping in nature. One examiner noted 'Candidates who engaged with the 'more interesting to the audience than…' part of the question came up with some great alternative ideas about what 'interesting' might mean, including ideas about voyeurism, shock, a misogynistic fascination with seeing a woman lose control'. A number of useful references were made to the 2008 Doran production (AO5) supporting the view that Ophelia, pre-madness, is rather more than a passive victim, with a number of candidates recalling the moment from the production where Ophelia undermines her brother's pious advice regarding the value of chastity before leaving for France by pointing out a packet of condoms concealed in his luggage. Many candidates noted the contrast between Ophelia's genuine madness and Hamlet's 'antic disposition' and were ready to discuss the way her madness could be seen as a form of liberation. A number of critical perspectives were given, with many candidates making good use of Elaine Showalter's (AO5) article on Ophelia from the British Library website. The script extract below shows nice 'light touch' integration of literary context (AO3) with an interesting and concise comparison of Ophelia's language (AO2) in 'madness' with 'Poor Tom' from *King Lear*.

Exemplar 2


When she becomes mad in the second half of the play we start to uncover her true emotions, and Ophelia gets far more interesting. We call her mad yet Ophelia's verse is metrically regular and sensical - unlike, for example, 'Mad Tom' in King Lear. One could suspect her insanity is more her own emplant of Hamlet's "antic disposition". However most Ophelia is her walls come down and interestingly, we begin to understand the truthy of her heart. Her madness empowers her, giving the the confidence and the excuse to expose the "tricks i'the world"

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Question 3 (a)

3 *Measure for Measure*

Either

(a) 'A play which explores the strengths and weaknesses of being merciful.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *Measure for Measure*? **[30]**

This was a very rarely tackled question, despite a reasonable number of candidates overall answering on *Measure for Measure*. Those that did tackle the question often made useful reference to Biblical notions of justice and mercy (A03) echoed in the title of the play, and by the Duke in the final scene. Higher ability candidates were able to usefully use the verb 'explores' from the question (AO5) to think about how the play, in terms of its identity as a comedy or tragedy (AO3) and its presentation of mercy and punishment, 'explores' issues without ever reaching a clear sense of resolution.

Question 3 (b)

(b) 'Nothing in the play is more unpleasant than Angelo's hypocrisy.'

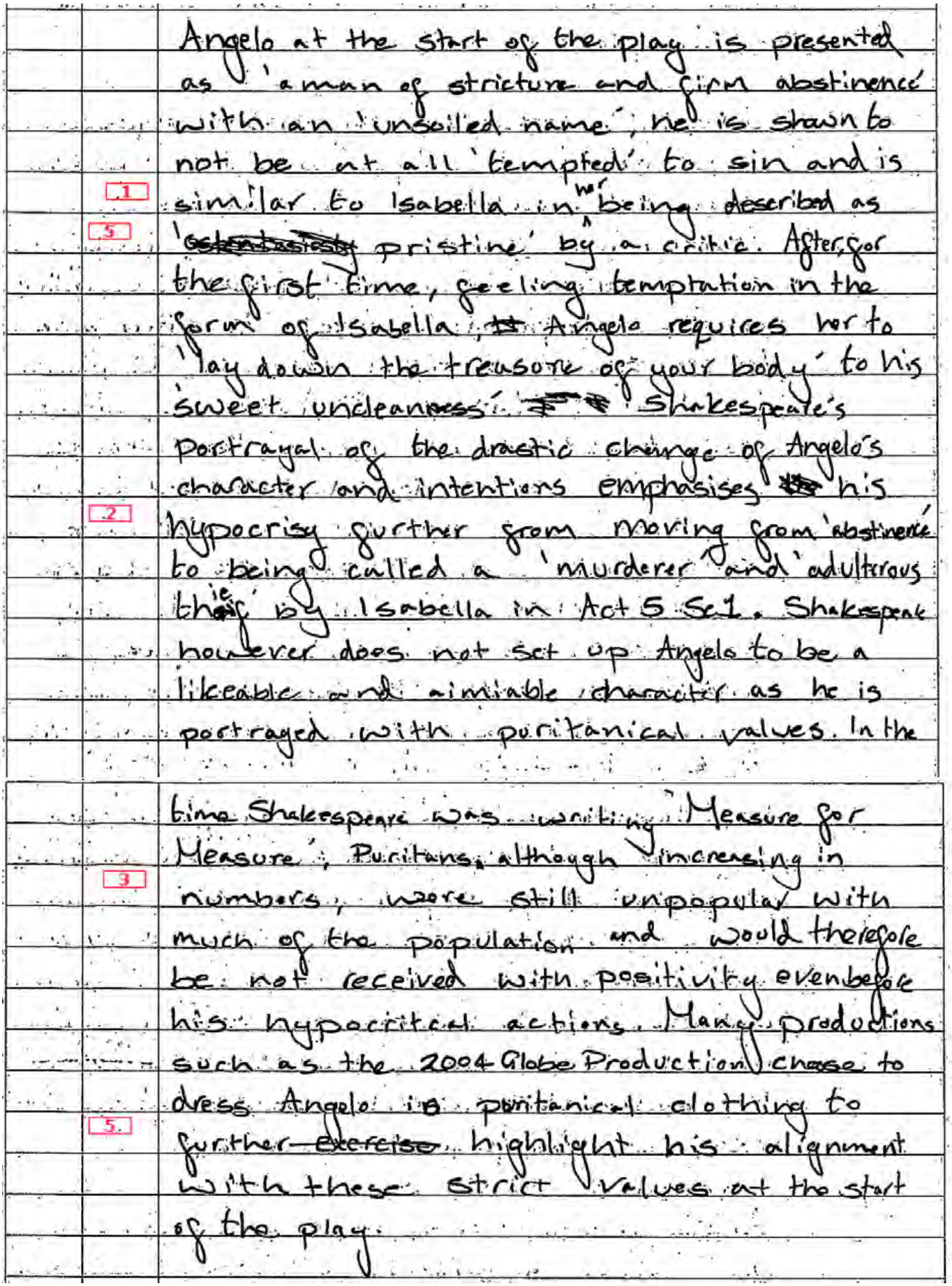
How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the role of Angelo in *Measure for Measure*? **[30]**

By far the more popular of the two *Measure for Measure* options, and candidates in general were well-prepared for a question on Angelo. Angelo had a good number of astute defenders for his behaviour (AO5) – offering such arguments as his self-professed doubts about his suitability for the role of interim leader, and the way his sexual desires seem to genuinely shock and surprise him. Candidates often talked very relevantly about other behaviours which might challenge Angelo's hypocrisy in terms of 'unpleasantness' – such as the Duke's abdication of responsibility and Isabella's arguably excessive piety. However, in some cases these arguments led to Angelo becoming a rather peripheral figure in his own question (AO1).

The script extract below is an example of a candidate clearly very familiar with the play and who is able to make telling use of the contrasting ways Angelo is presented as the play progresses (AO2), with effective reference to context of Puritanism (AO3) and performance (AO5).

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Exemplar 3



Angelo at the start of the play is presented as 'a man of stricture and firm abstinence' with an 'unsoiled name', he is shown to not be at all 'tempted' to sin and is similar to Isabella in her being described as 'pristine' by a critic. After, for the first time, feeling temptation in the form of Isabella, Angelo requires her to 'lay down the treasure of your body' to his 'sweet uncleanness'. Shakespeare's portrayal of the drastic change of Angelo's character and intentions emphasises his hypocrisy further from moving from 'abstinence' to being called a 'murderer' and 'adulterous thief' by Isabella in Act 5 Sc 1. Shakespeare however does not set up Angelo to be a likeable and amiable character as he is portrayed with puritanical values. In the time Shakespeare was writing 'Measure for Measure', Puritans, although increasing in numbers, were still unpopular with much of the population and would therefore be not received with positivity even before his hypocritical actions. Many productions such as the 2004 Globe Production chose to dress Angelo in puritanical clothing to further highlight his alignment with these strict values at the start of the play.

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Question 4 (a)

4 ***Richard III***

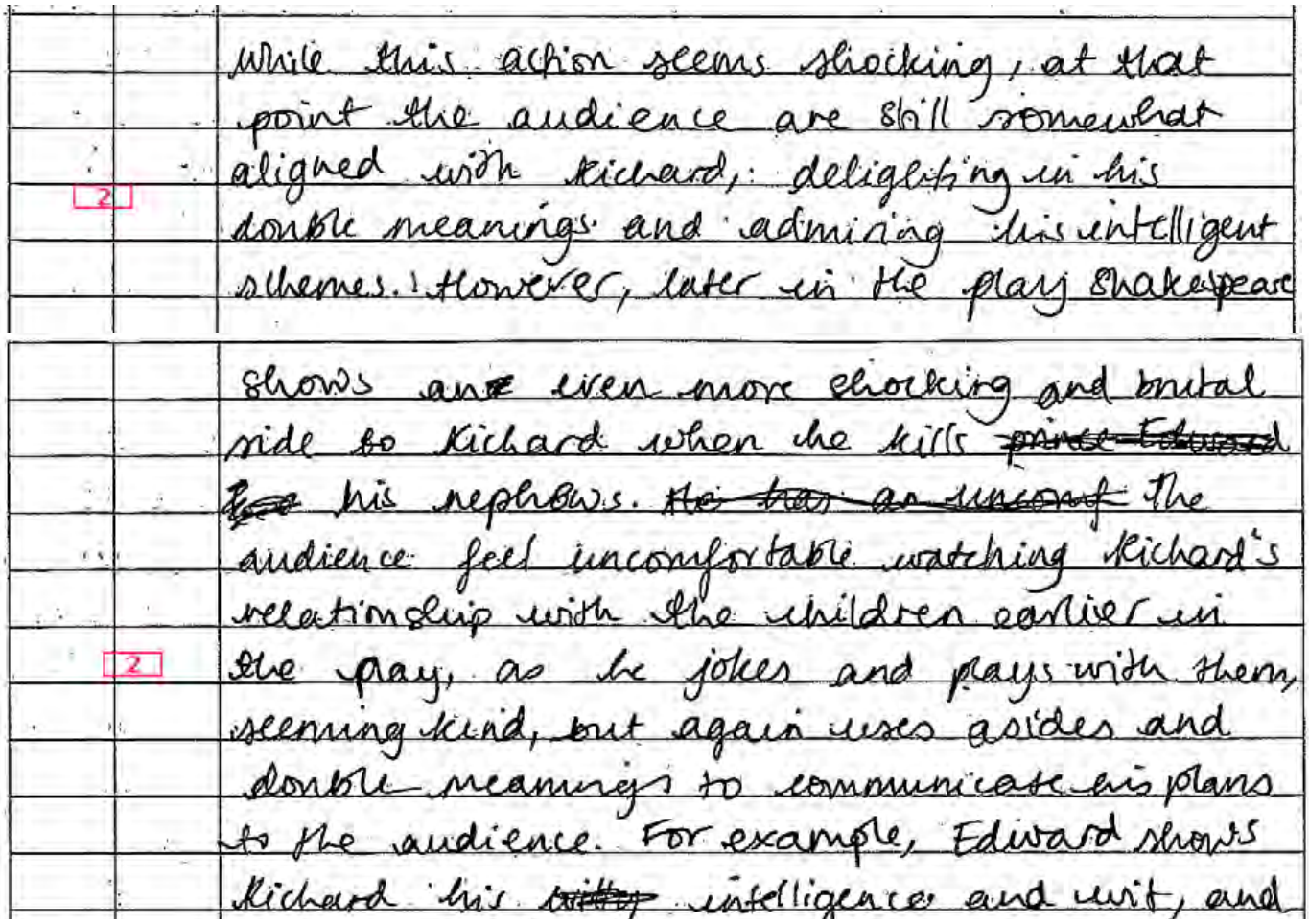
Either

(a) 'Family ties count for nothing in the world of *Richard III*.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the play? **[30]**

A relatively uncommon choice of play – with this by far the most common question candidates opted for. There was much good work with detailed analysis (AO2) of Richard's brutally ironic duality in how he talks about his family to their face and to the audience. There was plenty of evidence of detailed knowledge of the complex family relationships presented in the play – with this often being connected to the History genre (AO3). One examiner noted that 'the loyalty of the members of the House of Lancaster was sometimes connected to the play's purpose as propaganda, but the opportunity to write about this, and the play's loyalty to the Tudors, was often missed'. The script extract below shows an impressive ability to build detailed purposeful analysis of language (AO2) into a detailed argument about how Richard and an audience's reaction to him changes across the play (AO5) with a telling link to context (AO3).

Exemplar 4



While this action seems shocking, at that point the audience are still somewhat aligned with Richard, delighting in his double meanings and admiring his intelligent schemes. However, later in the play Shakespeare shows an even more shocking and brutal side to Richard when he kills ~~prince Edward~~ his nephews. ~~He has an accent~~ The audience feel uncomfortable watching Richard's relationship with the children earlier in the play, as he jokes and plays with them, seeming kind, but again uses asides and double meanings to communicate his plans to the audience. For example, Edward shows Richard his ~~witty~~ intelligence and wit, and

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Richard says: '[aside] so wise so young, never does live long'. By emphasising their youth and intelligence, Shakespeare makes Richard's wishes seem even more unnatural and shocking, as the princes are elevated. Later in the play, Richard ~~as~~ mimics their murder, saying 'I wish the bastards dead.' ~~This is~~ The use of a short, ~~and~~ sentence or an end-stopped line, and the ~~harsh~~ harsh language makes this statement even more blunt and brutal. This is contrasted with Tyrell's ~~(sorry)~~, who ~~found~~ was supposed to be a hardened and unfeeling murderer, remorse after killing them, describing their 'alabaster innocent arms', and the 'prayer book' one was holding, presenting the 'tender babes' as ~~the~~ innocent and undeserving of the 'ruthful butchery' they recieved. This act by Richard

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is the ultimate breaking of family ties, and shows him as evil and unnatural. This aligns with the Tudor belief that he was 'God's scourge', sent to punish England for usurping the throne and undermining the divine right of kings. This would mean the play acts as Tudor propaganda, conforming with the view that Richard was cruel and evil, justifying Henry VII's usurpation of the throne.

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Question 4 (b)

(b) 'Buckingham is not just Richard's sidekick – he's an important character in his own right.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the role of Buckingham in *Richard III*? **[30]**

A very rarely answered question; with most candidates being of the view that Buckingham is mainly a foil for Richard rather than a fully developed character. One examiner noted, 'candidates engaged with Buckingham's obsequiousness and made plenty out of his moment of realisation 'Made I him king for this?'.

Question 5 (a)

5 ***The Tempest***

Either

(a) '*The Tempest* celebrates the power and value of education.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the play? **[30]**

A popular choice of play, with this being the most popular question. One issue was that a minority of candidates did not read the question in detail, saw a word they liked (in this case 'power') and responded to a statement ('*The Tempest* celebrates power, and the value of education') which is somewhat different from the one that was in front of them. This led to discussion of issues such as colonialism, patriarchy and Jacobean notions of magic which, while interesting, were often not linked to the presentation of education in the play. It is worth reiterating the importance of being very clear about the wording of the question. Good responses considered the question's theme of education in an interestingly broad way to include aspects such as characters' increased self-awareness, for example, Prospero's enigmatic willingness at the end to 'Acknowledge' Caliban and his 'darkness' as something that belongs to him. Some interesting work challenged the notion of the play 'celebrating' education and questioned whether books should indeed be 'prized above' a Dukedom, as Prospero's bookish lack of vigilance enabled a power-grab. Additionally, candidates noted that the 'education' Caliban receives from Miranda and Prospero could be seen as cultural imperialism (AO5) – with Caliban's native tongue dismissed as a 'most brutish…gabble'.

The script extract below develops an interesting comparison of the educations of Miranda and Caliban with thoughtful links to context (AO3) and language analysis (AO2). Nb. The reference to Shakespeare as a 'Victorian' writer shows that this misapprehension was shared by many candidates, including very able ones.

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Exemplar 5

5 Kim Hall proposed that "Caliban is associated with "darkness and dirt" opposite to miranda associated with purity and light. Miranda is ~~taught language by prospero from a~~ educated by prospero from a very early age but it can be argued that she is the most naïve one dimensional character within the whole play. In the exposition, We are met with a dramatic ~~girl~~ girl who "suffered with those 2 [she] I saw suffer". The hyperbolic language used by miranda heightens her emotion and reflects how a stereotypical Jacobean women would be expected to be; overflowing with passion. Despite her Western education she is left in the dark about her past life and when it is finally revealed to her, she is patronised and treated like less of a being "Dost 2 thou attend me?" It can be argued that miranda's sole purpose is to reflect the conventions of ~~the~~ Jacobean Society, as a pure innocent virgin, and a pawn 5 in a patriachal society (Brett). The value of the education that she has received ~~to~~ does not take away from her status as a women and the inequality within Victorian Society. As evidence,

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Jameson simply refers to her as "a picture of feminine beauty", with no real substance. Not merely would she be considered a pawn in Jacobean society but she is also a pawn within Prospero's plot to re-attain his dukedom as her marriage to Ferdinand secured his status- as they were seen playing a "[chess game] presenting their purpose. From a feminine perspective, English literature (especially during the Shakespearean era) idealises an oppressive and subordinate image of women, rendering education useless to them as they were expected to grow up and marry a man of their father's choosing. Furthermore Ferdinand her supposed love, does not stimulate any intellectual conversation or ask her about her previous education. Instead he simply says that "O if you are a virgin, I will make you Queen of Naples". Her innocence and purity is of more importance than her knowledge or personal worth, further idealised by Freud's psychanalytical 'Madonna/Whore Complex". Despite the 'Tempest' written in Jacobean times, Shakespeare understood and depicted the inequality amongst women and gender expectations. Despite Miranda being an educated female, she was still naïve to the nature of the "brave new world" and forced to accept her oppressive position as a woman in society.

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Question 5 (b)

(b) 'Nothing more than a pack of violent and selfish drunks.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the roles of Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo in *The Tempest*? **[30]**

A somewhat less popular question. Lower ability work used the quotation in the question as a springboard for a straightforward narrative account of how each of the three characters contributes to the plot of *The Tempest*. Higher ability work often particularly excelled in terms of AO5, with one examiner noting, 'Knowledge of Caliban gave rise to some superb postcolonial readings and the depth of knowledge about colonisation was often impressive. Marxist readings of Stephano and Trinculo, especially Stephano's plan to sell Caliban, were interesting.' Most candidates were of the view that the prompt quotation was a reductive way of seeing the trio and made a strong case for their wider contributions to themes of colonialism, to the play's ambiguous genre, and as an ironic comic double of Sebastian/Antonio's assassination plot.

Question 6 (a)

6 ***Twelfth Night***

Either

(a) 'The so-called happy ending of *Twelfth Night* leaves out many characters: Malvolio, Antonio, Sir Andrew.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the ending of *Twelfth Night*? **[30]**

A reasonably popular text choice, with this question by some distance the most popular. Most candidates managed to discuss all named characters with Malvolio being the dominant figure in the majority of responses; one examiner noting 'Malvolio proved fruitful, and analysis of 'the whole pack of you' was abundant'. One candidate interestingly made the case that this remark is directed to an audience guilty of taking sadistic pleasure in Malvolio's suffering. Higher ability responses realised that this was as much a question about structure (AO2) as about character. They discussed the ending interestingly in the context of the genre of comedy and the notion of twelfth night being a liminal point marking the ending of a period of revelry and a return to normality. It is a reasonable approach to contextualise a character's function at the ending in the light of their development across the play; however, some less successful responses made very little reference to the ending and developed a more general 'character study'.

The script extract below develops a concise and well-supported analysis of Antonio that successfully links his wider function to his 'unhappy' ending:

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Exemplar 6

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Additionally, the character of Antonio, who perhaps shows the most selfless love in the play, is also left out of the happy endings. It is frequently argued in Queer Theory by critics that Antonio's love of Sebastian is homoerotic and not purely heterosexual (as was portrayed in Bramagh's 1997 interpretation). Antonio even says that he 'adore[s]' Sebastian 'so' that 'danger shall seem sport' and he 'will go'. The verb 'adore' is only ever used elsewhere in the play for romantic love, for example when Sir Toby says that Maria 'adores' him and they are later married. Additionally, Antonio does not without danger walk through Illyria (this danger is highlighted in Nunn's 1996 film adaptation where Viola and the Captain are chased by armed guards at the start of the play). Therefore, in forsaking Sebastian to protect him from 'rough' and 'inhospitable' lands despite the danger it poses to himself, he loves Sebastian selflessly and desperately. However, when Sebastian is mistaken for Cesario by Olivia, he immediately agrees to marry her, and seemingly

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forgets about & all Antonio has done for him. The play ends with Sebastian marrying Olivia, and despite Antonio sacrificing his own wellbeing for his love of Sebastian, he does not get his happy ending. This may have been due to how homosexual relationships would not have been tolerated/accepted in the Elizabethan era, but regardless, despite saving Sebastian's life and risking his own for him, Antonio never gets his happy ending.

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Question 6 (b)

(b) 'Sir Toby cares more for pleasure than he does for people.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the role of Sir Toby in *Twelfth Night*?
[30]

This less popular question was often tackled well, with answers showing impressive textual knowledge in supporting their argument. Generally speaking candidates had an unfavourable view of Sir Toby, noting his capacity for cruelty and manipulation in the treatment of Malvolio and Sir Andrew, and how this sits somewhat uneasily within the genre of comedy (AO3). His defenders noted seemingly genuine affection for Maria and, less obviously, Olivia, with one examiner noting that his poor houseguest behaviour was sometimes seen as 'actually his way of caring for his niece' in distracting her from her grief.

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Section 2 overview

Some highly impressive close reading of this challenging poetry was seen by all examiners. Narrative or descriptive approaches were relatively unusual, with the majority of candidates aware of the need to focus on poets' methods.

Overall, there is still some work to be done in many cases in getting the balance correct between the set poem or passage and the wider collection or poem. Around 65-70% of the response should deal with the passage or poem on the paper, with 35-30% on connections. A number of candidates were keen to spend the majority of their essay discussing connecting poems with which they were evidently more comfortable.

In a significant minority of cases Section 2 work was considerably shorter and less developed than Section 1. Candidates are advised to spend an equal amount of time on each section, reflecting the equal number of marks available.

OCR support Teacher Delivery Guides are available for all of the AS poetry set texts. These can be found under the 'Planning and teaching' section of the AS English Literature webpage: http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce/as-a-level-gce-english-literature-h072-h472-from-2015/planning-and-teaching/#as-level

Question 7

7 Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Merchant's Prologue and Tale*

Discuss Chaucer's portrayal of the Merchant's view of marriage in the following extract from *The Merchant's Tale*.

In your answer explore the author's use of language, imagery and verse form and consider ways in which you find this extract characteristic of *The Merchant's Prologue and Tale*. **[30]**

Chaucer was in a clear second place in terms of popularity for Section 2. A striking feature of responses was secure and apposite linking to elsewhere in the poem (AO4) to deepen analysis. Most candidates understood the ironic tone of the extract, with many contrasting it to the Merchant's very adjacent description of his own wife as 'a shrewe at al' in the Prologue (AO4). There was much well-informed analysis of Chaucer's methods (AO2) – such as the Edenic metaphor 'paradys terreste', with many noting the foreshadowing of January's garden implicit here. Many candidates were keen to point out that the text is a product of an anti-feminist medieval culture (AO3) although often candidates didn't consider that Chaucer may be satirising these attitudes. Often more successful candidates were attuned to the comedy of the extract in the light of the content of the tale itself.

The script extract below is a very good example of effective analysis of the extract (AO2) combined with apposite cross-linking (AO4) and this candidate even draws on their knowledge of another of *The Canterbury Tales*:

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Exemplar 7

The literary allusion to the 'buxom' nature of 'Grisildis' 'grete pacience' at the beginning of the tale is a reference to the Clerk's Tale of an ideal image of a 'vertuous' and 'buxom' wife and is referenced again in this extract. The Merchant is clearly attempting to shatter the image of an ideal wife (with his tale and the reference to the 'buxom' nature of women is meant to be ironically used to undercut that sentiment. Therefore, the Merchant uses repitition to undercut the his marriage. He also uses a rhetorical question in the way he says 'who could have 'adversite that hath a wyf?', comically begging the question that will be answered with his tale. The reference to Adam and Eve also implies a 'serpent' must be present (Damyan later on) and references January's 'gardyn' that is the place of adultery and deciet towards the end of the poem. The 'paradis terrestre' that is said to be

marriage is also comically undertut by later by January ridiculous claiming he doesn't want to have 'parfit blisses two', for The 'Al redy, sir' implies a ridiculous patriarchal society where women are expected to serve but this is undercut in the tale. Therefore, Merchant's views are actually negative on marriage but comically positive here.

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Question 8

8 John Milton: *Paradise Lost, Books 9 & 10*

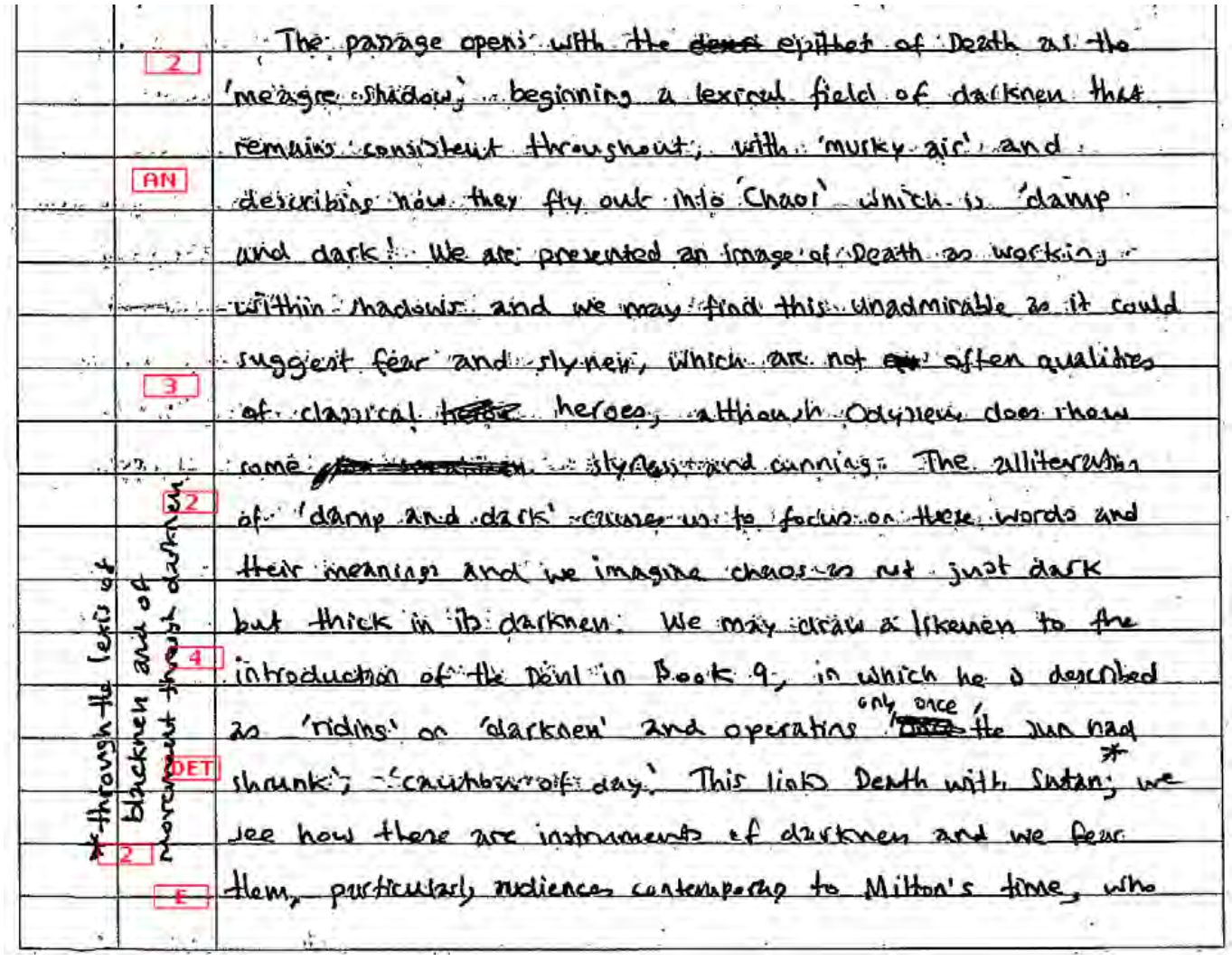
Discuss Milton's portrayal of Death in this extract from *Paradise Lost*, Book 10.

In your answer explore the author's use of language, imagery and verse form, and consider ways in which you find this extract characteristic of *Paradise Lost*, Books 9 and 10. **[30]**

The third most popular poetry option in Section 2. Candidates generally seemed very well-prepared for this task and confidently linked the presentation of Death here to the Fall in Book 9, and indeed the prelapsarian world before that. A good deal of detailed analysis (AO2) was seen of Milton's use of prosodic features, such as sibilance ('So saying, with delight he snuffed the smell / Of mortal change on earth') which was often connected to Satan's and his followers' later humiliating transformation into snakes. The richly sensory nature of the language of the extract was sometimes interestingly connected to Milton's blindness (AO3). Many candidates had a secure sense of *Paradise Lost* as an epic poem and discussed features such as epic simile. However, it was unusual, even in higher ability responses, to see candidates engaging with the effects of Milton's choices of allusion in the extract, such as how the power of Death's stare is rendered dramatic and supernatural through the 'Gorgonian rigor' it creates in the bridge.

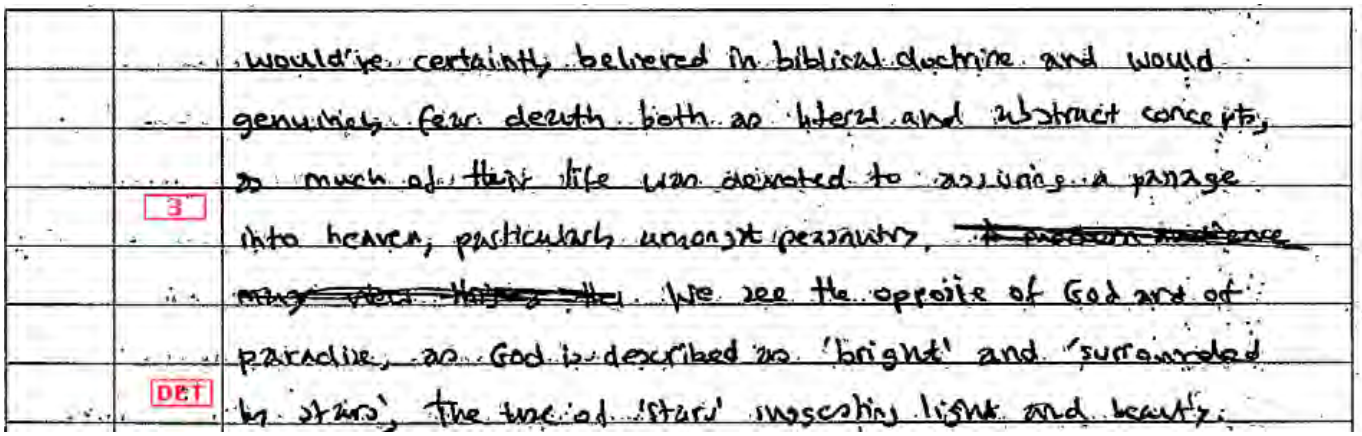
The script extract below demonstrates the candidate's skill in seeing key vocabulary in the passage (AO2) as linking to wider patterns and motifs in the extract and wider poem (AO4).

Exemplar 8



The passage opens with the ~~demo~~ epithet of Death as the 'meagre shadow', beginning a lexical field of darkness that remains consistent throughout, with 'murky air' and describing how they fly out into 'Chaos' which is 'damp and dark'. We are presented an image of Death as working within shadows and we may find this unadmirable as it could suggest fear and slyness, which are not often qualities of classical ~~hero~~ heroes, although Odysseus does show some slyness and cunning. The alliteration of 'damp and dark' causes us to focus on these words and their meanings and we imagine chaos as not just dark but thick in its darkness. We may draw a likeness to the introduction of the Devil in Book 9, in which he is described as 'riding' on 'darkness' and operates ~~only~~ once, the sun had shrunk, 'cauldron of day'. This links Death with Satan, we see how these are instruments of darkness and we fear them, particularly audiences contemporary to Milton's time, who

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would've certainly believed in biblical doctrine and would genuinely fear death both as literal and abstract concepts, so much of their life was devoted to assuring a passage into heaven, particularly amongst peasantry, [illegible]. We see the opposite of God and of paradise, as God is described as 'bright' and 'surrounded by stars', the typical 'stars' insocating light and beauty.

Question 9

9 Samuel Taylor Coleridge: *Selected Poems*

Discuss how Coleridge portrays the relationship between the speaker and nature in this extract from *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison*.

In your answer explore the author's use of language, imagery and verse form, and consider ways in which you find the poem characteristic of Coleridge's work in your selection. **[30]**

Reponses on Coleridge were rare, with most examiners reporting seeing few, if any. Most candidates were well-focused on the theme of nature; however, in some cases this led to quite extensive discussion of conventions of Romanticism (AO3) which somewhat diluted close analytical focus on the representation of nature in the given passage. Students were often able to talk effectively about the lyricism of the passage, and good levels of personal engagement were seen. Students had a wide-range of possible comparison poems, with 'The Nightingale' and 'Kubla Khan' featuring most often.

Question 10

10 Alfred, Lord Tennyson: *Maud*

Discuss the ways in which the speaker portrays the garden and the flowers in the following extract from *Maud*.

In your answer explore the author's use of language, imagery and verse form, and consider ways in which you find this extract characteristic of *Maud*. **[30]**

Reponses on *Maud* were extremely rare, however, some higher ability and literary work was seen, as evidenced by the script extract below which displays a hugely impressed knowledge of text and context, linking both into a cogent whole:

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Exemplar 9

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Nature and flowers are used ~~extensively~~ in various motifs throughout the poem, both enhancing and highlighting the persona's hope, passion, and love ~~flaws~~, Tennyson sometimes flips the focus and uses of nature to portray the persona's dark and deranged mind, and thus nature imagery plays a significant part in Tennyson's portrayal of the persona's deranged mental state.

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The persona is presented in the extract as using nature and flowers to demonstrate his emotions, perhaps because he cannot really comprehend them himself. It is characteristic of the persona to project his emotions onto nature, and this is evident in the extract when he claims that 'the lilies and roses were all awake' and that ... 'they sigh'd for the dawn and thee'. Lilies and roses are flowers mentioned frequently throughout the poem, emphasising Maud's beauty and the persona's love for her - 'Roses' symbolise passion and romance and 'lilies' innocence and purity, and as both of these flowers are 'sighing' for Maud perhaps it can be implied that the persona longs more for her to love him than he actually does for her presence and company. In how the flowers are personified to be 'awake', it is perhaps suggested that the persona is preoccupied with the darkness around them, as he is awake at a time he perhaps shouldn't be, and further his preoccupation with Maud may be demonstrated; in the Victorian era, monomania was seen as a mental condition, wherein people were obsessed with the objects of their affection and could think of nothing else. This idea is certainly portrayed in the persona throughout

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2 the poem, as he constantly describes his desperate longing for Maud. The verb 'sighing', evident in this line, is used to imply a desperate longing throughout the poem, and the persona projects his emotions onto a cedar tree in asking it, 4 'O, not more sighing for Lebanon', 'dark cedar tho' thy limbs have here increased', perhaps demonstrating his melancholic longing that he knows he would be better off without. The persona portrays flowers and the garden in the extract as devices for him to project his emotions onto, and thus enable him to comprehend & and understand his emotions better through.

The speaker also portrays the garden and the flowers in it as being in love with Maud, perhaps also implying 2 the persona's dehumanisation of her. In the extract, the persona calls Maud 'Queen rose' of 'the rosiest garden of girls', emphasising her superiority in social status and 3 perhaps alluding to Tennyson's own love of Rosa Baring, who eventually married a richer man to living Maud with flowers and even calling her a 'rose', the persona is ~~objectifying~~ romanticising her very being, as if she, as a person, is defined by her beauty and how much the persona love her. The ~~poem~~ extract begins with an eye-2 rhyme, creating an uncomfortable or ~~dis~~ discordant rhythm for the poem to be read in, and also linking the words 'blood' and 'mood', perhaps emphasising how aware the E persona is of his own life when in the garden and surrounded by nature, as he can even feel his 'blood' as he stands there. However, the rhyme scheme progresses to a more regimented alternate rhyme scheme, perhaps implying that

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the longer the persona stands in the garden, the more certain he becomes of his thoughts. As poetry was intended to be read aloud in the Victorian era Lord Tennyson frequently read his poem ~~aloud~~ aloud to friends. This alternate rhyme scheme also makes the last lines and stanzas very musical.

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The persona initially fell ~~in~~ in love with Maud's voice when she sang a 'martial song', and so he is in love with her sound, and this is reflected in the lyrical alternate rhyme scheme he uses to profess his love of Maud. He is also in love with her appearance (calling her eyes as 'blue' as 'violets') and thus in linking her with nature so frequently and in speaking of her with a musical rhythm the persona treats Maud as a poetic figure, stripping her of her humanity / identity and dehumanising her. It is therefore uncertain whether the interactions Maud and the persona have actually happen in the way the persona claims they do, or if he is simply in love with the poet's ~~Poetic~~ version of her he has created.

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1

Nature and flowers in the garden are also evidence for the persona's deranged psyche. The poem was originally called 'Maud or Madness' and in its subtitle of 'A Monodrama', it is evident to readers before they even begin reading reading the poem that they are in the ~~presence~~ presence of a deranged narrator (a 'monodrama' implies confusion within one single person, which is a paradoxical idea). This is highlighted in the first stanza of the poem in Part I when the persona describes a 'blood-red heath' despite 'blood-red' heaths being impossible, as they don't occur

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in nature. This is similarly evident in the extract, which ends with the persona describing how his love of Maud will kill him but be so powerful it will bring him back to life. This idea perhaps implies the poet-persona views love, and implies that he perhaps thinks love can be demonstrated most strongly in death. Tennyson was a great lover of Shakespeare, and died clutching a book of Shakespeare plays, and there is evident intertextuality throughout the poem with both Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet (he even nicknamed the poem his 'little Hamlet'). Therefore, the idea that love is strongest in death - could not from the tragic ending of Romeo and Juliet. In ending the extract, and also Part I entirely, in claiming he will 'blossom' in 'purple and red', the persona is making Part I come full circle, back to the 'blood-red' imagery he began the poem with (and he also ends the poem with in Part III). It was also conventional of Victorian literature (and poetry) to have the personas talking to flowers, but what is unusual about this poem is that here, the flowers talk back, the 'red-rose' saying 'she is near she is near'. Therefore, it is evident through the persona's apostrophe to and perception of flowers in the garden and the red imagery he links with them that he is not psychologically sane

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Question 11

11 Christina Rossetti: *Selected Poems*

Discuss Rossetti's use of a playful speaking voice in 'Winter: My Secret'.

In your answer explore the author's use of language, imagery and verse form and consider ways in which you find the poem characteristic of Rossetti's work in your selection. **[30]**

The runaway winner in terms of popularity, well over half of the Section 2 responses were on Rossetti. As might be expected, the question facilitated responses from right across the range of marks. Higher ability responses embraced the prompt of 'a playful speaking voice' with aplomb and explored the poem's subtle humour and enigmatic nature with precision and skill. Less secure candidates gave little or no consideration to 'playfulness' instead developed generalised narrative discussion and often had an insistent biographical reading of the poem (AO3). Candidates were often thoughtful in terms of links, focusing on the relative atypicality of the poem's playful tone (AO4). One examiner noted 'links to poems which shared a theme or idea but used a different voice to present it, like the melancholy presentation of privacy and possession in 'Shut Out', were fruitful.'

The script extract below shows excellent AO4 skill in bringing two Rossetti poems into interesting and focused dialogue with one another:

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Exemplar 10

11

'Winter: My Secret' is characteristic of many of Rossetti's poems in the techniques used, but Rossetti often employs the same techniques in different ways throughout her work.

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For example, the first person voice responding to an unheard speaker is

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also found in 'No Thank You, John'. This technique allows a woman agency at a time where the ideal of femininity was to be yielding and acquiescent to a man's demands. The poetic voice in both these poems denies the ~~[illegible]~~ addressee something: in 'Winter', Rossetti says 'I tell my

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secret? No indeed, not I', and in 'No Thank You John', 'I never said I loved you, John.' These first lines begin with the pronoun 'I', giving Rossetti the power in recounting the story, and the strong denials of 'never' and 'no' give her an

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uncompromising authority that would have been denied her at that time. The exclusion of the questions also places the focus on the narrator in both poems, giving a woman primacy at a time when they did not even have the vote.

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