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ENGLISH

ADVANCED LEVEL

Subject 9000

Paper 9000/1

Question 1

The most popular question, according to examiners' estimates, and on the whole done quite well. Candidates responded to the obvious contrast in feel and mood, and on Clare could often show *how* Clare creates mood through choice of language, movement and structure. Many preferred the second poem on the grounds that the sentiments were more healthy, and took Clare to task for being defeatist. A predictable problem for some candidates was how to identify the experience Clare describes; for the candidates who could only respond to surface meanings the play of the poem's language in (a) was pretty well lost. They tended to ignore the past tense in line 7 and thus ignored the contrasts set up within the poem. Everything became homogenized into a generalised gloom or despair, and was contrasted – over-simply – with poem (b). As regards (b), some – even many – candidates responded well to the imagery and rhythmic excitement of the poem, although inevitably some candidates thought the poet was literally a soldier.

Question 2

Attempted by fewer candidates, good candidates found it challenging and did extremely well, while weaker candidates were lost in (b). Most grasped the point of the Shakespeare, though weaker candidates had problems in expressing their understanding of the poem, and resorted to crude paraphrase. The poem poses the question of convention, and it was around this that candidates had their problems, with some of them not being able to recognise the conventions of poetry for what they are. The Joyce extract puzzled all those who expected only one kind of 'meaning' – and as with the Clare and Lowell poems many wrote about what they expected to find rather than what was actually there. Better candidates – those capable of responding to the non-logical ways language may be used in literature – responded well to the paradoxical nature of the extract, to its shifts of feeling and association, and to the links provided by images and words. They also noted the play of reference and association in the passage, and often commented on how 'poetic' – even *conventionally* poetic – this was in comparison with Shakespeare. In short, they began to see different ways of understanding convention.

Question 3(a) (Lowell)

Candidates used only to a prose of logical discourse were lost here, and provided some bizarre misreadings (one thought the poem Lowell's reaction to treading in dogshit – 'I cannot see the dirt at my feet'). Many wrote about the poem stanza by stanza, often trying to offer a paraphrase, which was impossible. Probably misled by the deceptive simplicity of stanza 1, they were wholly disconcerted by stanza 2: e.g.

> he used to swim in the 'surf' by the 'green go light' which
> was probably the signal that bathing was permitted.

The idea of metaphorical language seems unknown to some candidates, as does the notion of language itself as creative, as productive of effects beyond those of meaning or reference or description. In a desperate attempt to catch something of meaning or reference, many saw references to Dutch elm disease, or at a high level of sophistication, to the destruction of nature by urban life. The best answers – and some were *very* good – were those where candidates were confident enough to see that paraphrase was impossible, and who attempted to register the shifting movements of the poem as it displaced itself from level to level. Some candidates were able to respond extremely well to the surprises of the poem and to approach the text by way of its imagery and the turning of its syntax.

Question 3(b)

The prose passage was attempted by the weaker candidates, possibly because it was in prose and of a seeming simplicity. It was difficult here to discriminate amongst abilities, the answers achieving a rather uniform quality. Many simply paraphrased or, obviously at a loss, applied inappropriate ideas about alliteration, rhythm and onomatopoeia. Some noted that imagery seemed odd and often felt that the passage was sentimental.

In conclusion, while there were some very good candidates indeed, as shown by the poetry answers, there are nonetheless many candidates unable to respond to language except at the basic and inadequate level of its use to convey factual information. Poor presentation and illegibility are also gaining ground. Schools and candidates should be clear that examiners will read scripts, but not decipher them. Where scripts cannot be made out, they will be marked on the basis of what is legible, and on that basis only. Spelling and grammar continue to be casualties.

Paper 9000/2

The extra half-hour allowed was an opportunity for candidates to respond rather more adequately than in the past to the demands of 'A' level English Literature: to show the ability to make clear conceptual distinctions, argue a case persuasively, respond to texture as well as ideas with sensitivity and to present material with a varied and lively articulation. At the higher levels this opportunity was seized by candidates who produced detailed and cogently argued essays displaying a confident grasp of texts and suggesting the capacity to pursue the subject at honours level. However, for many candidates the extra time allowed served only to expose their inability to explore or develop ideas, build an argument or analyse poetic and dramatic effects. Lists become longer than usual, story telling more blatant, waffle more tedious. The frequent tendency to avoid vital aspects of the questions – for example, 'the miraculous' in 2b, 'identity' in 3b – was magnified and inability to distinguish sensibly between the terms used in the question – e.g. 'personality' and 'mood' in 1a(ii) – more glaringly obvious.

A worrying feature of the responses of many candidates was a tendency to trivialise the issues at stake in the plays and to reduce the richness of Shakespeare's language and imagery to banality; for example, very many candidates made the attraction of Egypt to the Romans in *Anthony and Cleopatra* sound like a travel brochure for the Costa del Sol. It may be a good teaching method to stress the extent to which Shakespeare is 'our contemporary' but the imaginative leap that his plays require in order to be appreciated today should not be ignored.

Particularly worrying was the almost uniform failure of candidates to respond with any adequacy to questions demanding a response to 'the movement of the verse', suggesting that scant attention is paid in the classroom to Shakespeare's dramatic poetry. Despite the generous provision of passages bristling with striking effects of language, imagery and tone, etc., many candidates reverted to an 'O' level paraphrase lacking any sense of the pressure of Shakespeare's writing.

It is clear that many schools are still not training students to view the plays as works for the stage. Few candidates commented on the stage-groupings in 1a(i) and even fewer responded to the rituals enacted in 1.c. Where candidates were able to think in terms of changing audience responses to a developing action, answers tended to be more intelligent and secure.

One examiner found enough of interest in the scripts he marked to submit the following to the Subject Officer:

My own experience, however, was not altogether desolating. I am grateful for the following casserole of metaphor, discovered in an *Othello* essay:

"When jealousy and in this case sexual jealousy takes the reigns facts and reasons become its playthings, not even the truth can quench its thirst."

And my doubts about *The Winter's Tale* were put to rest by this perceptive comment:

"The Winter's Tale is a book/play written to last a long winter's night, that is why it is such a long book compared to many of Shakespeare's works."

Finally, with holidays approaching, you may think of visiting Egypt, of which our candidates have combined to produce the following attractive portrayal:

Egypt is 'a place where you enjoy yourself, feasting with eunuchs and nubians all the day and night'. Indeed, 'the presence of eunuchs adds to the atmosphere of love and fertility,' despite Cleopatra's declaration 'I have no pleasure in playing with a eunuch.' Nevertheless, 'the sexual images of Egypt are very large' and 'sex is very important to the Egyptians and they believe the more they have, the better it is'. Mark Antony himself seems to agree with this: 'last night you did desire it', he says to Cleopatra.

'The characters who frequent Egypt are amorous and great lovers of expense' and they certainly enjoy life as 'Egypt is soft and luxurious, phrases such as 'oily palm' help give this air of relaxation, the dress of Egyptians, light, floating gowns give an air of sexuality not found in Rome where the people wear armour and swords.' The contrast with Rome is certainly marked: Antony is 'referred to as a pillar and pillars are made out of stone. This indicates Antony's stony nature in Rome, a very cold and stony city. When in Egypt Antony is a strumpet's fool thereby indicating that Egypt is more jolly and less serious than Rome.'

If you do decide to visit Egypt, follow Cleopatra's example and take a trip on a 'burnished barge' for this is 'the type of transport that the Queen of Egypt used to travel along the Nile on'.

Paper 9000/3

In general, examiners found that the standard of work seemed higher this year: possibly because candidates found either texts or questions on them more to their liking, possibly even because at least two texts, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Sons and Lovers* seemed accessible and more challenging texts were not studied.

It is always necessary to stress each year the requirement for questions to be read thoroughly and to be understood before starting to write. (The increase of time allowed to three hours, one hopes, has helped in this direction. It is hoped that candidates will be encouraged to do this rather than to write more.) There was still a tendency to tell too much of the plot, especially where novels were concerned, and a tendency to rear away from the argument into irrelevancies.

Spelling was occasionally atrocious – many variants of 'tragedy' and 'Eliot' occurred. Lack of punctuation led to mysterious statements. Bad handwriting and faint ink caused distress to many examiners. On what may seem a trivial point, may we suggest that scripts are properly tied up with some lasting string: cotton is useless. Pages become detached and in the wrong order.

Part I

The Miller's Tale The passage was straightforward but caused problems for modern English prose, which is what is required. Comments on the passage were not very good, many insisted in leaping forward into the Tale and adding irrelevant information. What was needed was an exact elucidation and commentary on the first four lines and an account of student life as given by Chaucer here, with some attempt at discovering his attitude.

The Clerk's Tale The passage was difficult to put into modern English, but many candidates produced good versions and wrote well on the ideas in the second stanza but failed to connect 'clerkes' with the Clerk or with the ideas in the Envoi. Few could write about Chaucer's poetry: it meant nothing to them, it seemed.

The Alchemist Most did well on Sir Epicure's exit and the general ideas and undertones of the same.

Marvell The invitation to write on 'To his Coy Mistress' which had seemed generous and interesting, brought disappointing responses. Most plodded through the poem, describing his intentions and his imagery and, very occasionally, his vocabulary. Hardly anyone noticed that it was a metaphysical poem or alluded to its wit. Its concentration, complication, ambiguity, rhetoric hyperbole, dramatic imagination and intensity passed people by. For most it was an elaborate exercise to coax a girl friend into bed. The poetry eluded them.

Tennyson Again the response to this poem was poor. It seems to be difficult for candidates to write about poetry or poetic devices or the poet's intentions. The melancholy and nostalgia of the lyric were hardly mentioned.

Hardy Candidates succumbed often to the temptation of describing the passage, instead of examining its implications and Hardy's methods of writing.

D.H. Lawrence This passage produced some extremely good answers; everyone, it seemed, knew all about Miriam and wrote well about her and about Paul's relations with his mother. There was less good comment on Lawrence's writing, although salient points were often picked up.

T.S. Eliot Candidates were content with some basic explanations of the wheel and were frequently unable to say where else allusions to it were in the play. Comments on Eliot's style here were mostly futile.

Part II

The Miller's Tale Lively and appreciative answers were given. There was an inclination in less good candidates to ignore the Miller's view of the world or Chaucer's portrayal of Alison.

The Clerk's Tale Few candidates wrote about this, but those who did, argued sensibly about the category of the tale.

The Alchemist Answers were confident and good arguments about the perpetual motion of the plot and about the desire to change oneself were advanced. Candidates had an amused grasp of the play and obviously enjoyed writing about it.

Metaphysical Poetry There were some good essays on Herbert, but many, though containing apt quotations, did not reflect a close scrutiny of the poet's argument with God and failed to identify its teasing, theatrical, sometimes conversational tone or its very personal ring. There was a tendency to write rather general essays about Herbert and Marvell, without sufficient reference to the questions asked.

(Too few candidates wrote on Pope, Tennyson or Trollope for general comment.)

The Mayor of Casterbridge This was a favourite book to write about and there was some cogent argument and real understanding in the answers. Nevertheless, many candidates lacked any ideas about pessimism and Hardy's misfortunes, ignored coincidence, irony and the novelist's manoeuvrings of disastrous situations. Portraits of the women were good but Hardy's hand in them underestimated. The question on buying and selling was often well answered and documented, although deeper implications not always sought for. Story-telling in answers was a weakness of many weaker candidates who often reduced the novel to an 'Archers' script.

Sons and Lovers Candidates liked the question on 'Son and Lover', but many answers told the story in reply and gave a catalogue of relationships. Good candidates knew how to write in general terms and then relate what they were saying to particular passages for illustration of their argument. 'Social realism' did not mean a great deal beyond Mrs. Morel's class consciousness and the 'poetic force' of Lawrence was dealt with better in comments on the passage in Part I. Studies of Walter Morel were numerous and were often sensitive, observant and detailed, though there was less reference to Lawrence's handling of the character than one would have liked here.

Murder in the Cathedral There were not many 'takers' here. Those who did attempt the questions wrote well on the knights, though a little superficially, and on the drama of the chorus and the non-tragic aspects of the play. There were some very clear and well-considered essays and the text was obviously familiar and well-remembered.

A Chief Examiner's Report is necessarily a distillation of many assistant examiners' comments. Many good examiners not only mark scripts with great sensitivity but make splendidly perceptive comments on the scripts which they have marked. In the hope that you will find it stimulating, one such report, more acerbic because it was not written originally for publication, is printed below.

Paper 9000/3

1(a) Frequently it's the small words which defeat even those candidates who have worked hard on the text. Thus those who were able by dint of good memories to translate the last line, often forgot about *'Ful'* often blessed and *'all'* the chambre.

(ii) worked best for those who read the question. 'Chaucer contrive' was ignored by most candidates. Surprisingly few were able to make anything of the beautifully

punning 'solas'. 'For to see' was not generally understood, as soon became evident from (iii) where the misunderstanding of 'and his rente' made a surprising difference to the quality of answers.

(iii) Only about 5% of candidates were able to see that Chaucer is not at all in the passage attempting to give a portrayal of a medieval student's life, but instead is preparing the reader through the eyes of the Miller for Nicholas's later actions in the *Tale*. I was gratified, however, that as many as the 5% were able to see through the question and to say that it was impossible to deduce Chaucer's attitude to 'this way of life' as that was not the function of the passage. Less able candidates said that they supposed that Nicholas was what Chaucer thought was typical of a student's life (what nonsense!) The vast majority ignored the question altogether and instead wrote – misguidedly for the most part – about what Chaucer's attitude to Nicholas was here (forgetting that it is the Miller's view that is characterised, and that Chaucer's own attitude is only seen ironically through the mistreatment of things astronomical).

1(b) While there were several 'literal' readings of the passage, I found this paraphrase to be more thoughtfully done than the *Miller's Tale* paraphrase. There were more 'landmines' here and they were identified more accurately. At least many answers made grammatical sense, which is more than can be said for answers to 1(a) (i). (ii) was not well done, however, most candidates restricting themselves to a very narrow range of material. Much the preferable method would be to go through the passage with a toothcomb, underlining all the different elements in the stanza which could be said to be 'ideas' and then briefly to treat each one. (iii), on Chaucer's poetry was appalling, very few students being awarded more than 2 out of 6, those two being given for 'repetition' and 'synonyms'. The number who made reference to the peculiarities of 'ryhmne royal' *(sic)*, and the number who were unable to characterise its rhyme scheme accurately, was astounding.

1(c) Few candidates were able to be sufficiently systematic to do justice to (i). A different comment can be made about each of the four speeches of Mammon in this context, and more than one point can be found to be made on each of the four. Similarly, there was a narrow range of comment in (ii). Almost no candidate had a single valid point to make about 'Jonson's dramatic verse'. Most seemed to think that this extract was in prose, and were therefore baffled. Teaching on qualities of verse, prose, narrative, style and method is lamentable in this paper, and also (I remember) on the Shakespeare paper. It should be one of the prerequisites for a B Grade at 'A' level that a candidate should be able to respond critically to the *ways* in which literature works. This aspect of work has deteriorated steadily over the past 13 years, while discursive writing has improved no end. The result is that students are prevented from getting a good grade by their performance on Section A – a great shame as for the able this is by far the easier section (and for teachers, by far the easier part of the paper to teach for.)

1(d) Some centres clearly thought that the dictation of notes on each main poem would suffice. By far the best answers were those who had not only understood the references and stored them, but who were able to note their effects and affects. It was surprising that so many produced answers which never said what the poem was about. The last task was ignored or done in a desultory fashion by most. However, this question was the best discriminator on the paper, and produced some outstanding work, bearing in mind that they had only 30 minutes.

1(e) No Pope.

1(f) The easy questions (i) and (ii) were badly answered. Admittedly none of

the 'good centres' in my apportionment had done this question, or done Tennyson. Few knew what a 'poetic device' was; most contented themselves with paraphrase of an inaccurate and soporific kind. Few got beyond repetition and 'It is characteristic of Tennyson to go on and on and be boring' *(sic)*. I should have thought that 'moods' would have automatically meant more than one, but many, taking their cue from (iii) wrote exclusively about the 'mood of grief'. The best way of answering(ii) was to take each mood in turn, briefly identify it, and then give a reference to another Tennyson poem where it occurs. In this way an enormous amount of ground could have been covered succinctly. 'How characteristic' means that candidates have to find some things that are characteristic and some that are not, and at the end decide how characteristic the poem is. Many candidates are not well-equipped to see through the 'examination jargon' employed. I didn't see anything that could be called an engagement with the issues involved in (iii).

1(g) The few who did this did it quite well. Most knew where the passage came in the novel, though some need to be more careful in reading: 'What events' means that mention needs to be made of more than one event. (ii) had been well prepared, even if it led to some 'overweaning' answers, where characteristics of Trollope were seen here which are not present! (iii) was well done, with a wide range of points.

1(h) Most got the context. (ii) is the kind of question which needs a systematic method. Some candidates did a very thorough job on the question. (iii) was not well done, in keeping with all the style answers on the paper. It does say 'ways' and 'descriptive writing': words only seen by some of the writers on the passage.

1(i) The best answered Section A. All candidates appeared to understand Paul's and Miriam's character, and to be able to provide evidence from the passage in order to answer the question. The better the range of comment, the better the candidate was likely to do. Even (iii) was better done by most, for few missed the uses of colour, symbolism and varied sentence length (which gave them a decent start).

1(j) The first two were very well done. There were very interestingly diverse 'angles' on the wheel, which provided stimulating reading. Some I thought were quite brilliant, and far above the standard required for a good grade at 'A' Level. Most had taken the opportunity to think about the Wheel in Chaucerian, Elizabethan and modern terms, and provided cogent reasons for Eliot's use of it as a crucial symbol in the play. It was a lack of critical vocabulary and lack of practice in trying to pin down what is typically Eliotian that got in the way of better marks for (iii). Most tried hard to describe what they thought to be typical of Eliot, and commendably avoided the cliche 'lit. crit. terms'. However, in doing so there was a lack of clarity in what was trying to be said.

2(a) One can only demonstrate poetic justice by saying how exactly the punishments fit the crime. Thus those who avoided saying what happened to the various characters could not say how poetically just the punishments were. In Absolom's case, for example, it is poetically just that his face is farted in because he was 'somedeel sqaimous/Of farting.' Many forgot to account for the poetic justice of the fact that the carpenter's arm is broken (and therefore that he would be unable to work). Many ignored the Miller's view of the world altogether, although, surely, that is the only way in which the *Tale* can be seen as poetic justice. It was rather surprising to find so many candidates who failed to grasp what Absolom kissed. Chaucer is playing a trick on us here – it is not just the characters' cries of 'A beerd!' which are

important. He kisses her 'naked ers' – but that is only what Absolom thinks; the passage is at that point written from his point of view.....

2(b) 'Not much', was the answer from many. Those who restricted themselves to the descriptions of Alisoun were not really answering the question about significance and interest. I only saw one answer which answered this question properly, and the writer (understandably) got tied up in knots about which bits were directly Chaucer's portrayal and which bits the Miller's.

2(c) This open question was not attempted by many. Knowledge of the sources proved a great assistance here as 'inventiveness' could have a safe anchor in something like authenticity. I found the treatment of *comic* spirit to be rather disappointing, for few really pinpointed what was comic in the spirit of the *Tale*.

3(a) Few of these made sense. Only two or three could demonstrate that the poem did or did not have a 'quiet tone and pace'.

3(b) These were chiefly nonsense. 'Strong feelings' was generally attempted, but the comments on 'true feelings' were very odd. Surely there is a paradox inherent in the Tale about the nature of what a *true* feeling is. The six answers I saw on this title came nowhere near unsorting it.

3(c) This was the most popular choice. There was a good deal of confusion about what an allegory was and what a parable. Too few went to Sunday School, I fear. Most got them the wrong way round. The question asks 'What is your own view' but candidates were too shy on the whole to express their own opinion and thus debarred themselves from good marks, in that they did not directly answer the question. The best answers, and there were some good ones, pointed out that different elements of the story were of different kinds. Thus there was some attempt to sort out the muddle. Those who failed to define their own terms wallowed in a hopeless mud.

4(a) I saw very few to this. Curiously they didn't seem to know what 'plot' meant. Not enough was made of 'perpetual motion'.

4(b) A mechanical answer did quite well here, but not many looked critically at the phrase 'How central' which demands some adjudication.

4(c) The best were those from one centre which started from what Jonson said he was trying to achieve in *The Alchemist*. Thus they could appreciate the nature and function of the comedy. Others, less talented, tried to identify fun and what was serious. It's hard for them to get the tone right when writing about this play; it comes out as either pointlessly frivolous or as boringly puritanical. The tone of the candidate's own discourse in answers such as these always plays a prominent part in the success of the answer.

5(a) Surprisingly few mentioned the fact that Herbert writes in the first person. As before there was confusion about what the word 'personal' means. We intend it to mean 'peculiar to Herbert'. They often think it means 'peculiarly slanted to the reader'. Thus personal becomes a synonym for 'universal' and the whole argument goes up the creek.

5(b) Few know what 'lyric' means. Even fewer can tangle with 'lyric grace'. No one that I saw even tried 'slight lyric grace'.

5(c) I didn't see any.

6 None.

7(a) 'Lyric' was not understood. I only saw three out of about 30 who had any inkling of the meaning of the word. 'Make moments immortal' was also completely bewildering. The first phrase was not attempted by anyone. Washout.

7(b) Worse. 14 answers, only one of which mentioned any of the appropriate poems. It would have been kinder to have given the titles of the poems in list form.

7(c) The most popular, although the arguments were rather strange for the most-part. About half knew what 'pathos' meant. No one read the phrase correctly which says 'He has no passion'. They all thought it meant 'He does not write about the subject of passion' (i.e. sex); answer: 'nonsense – although the Victorians didn't approve of sex (!!!) there's a lot of sex between the lines e.g. *Charge of the Light Brigade'* (EH???). Generally, the arguments were rubbish.

8(a) None.

8(b) A few – about five – but no one dealt with 'how well'. They just wrote about the two worlds in catalogue form. Very dreary.

8(c) About 12 – no one knew what 'idyll' meant. They wrote about how English it was.

9(a) Extremely popular. Only a handful dealt with 'profoundly'. The less talented intellectually didn't understand that one can still be profoundly pessimistic and yet have things go right for a short time. Indeed, if things do go right for some time, then it only heightens the profundity of the pessimism when everything's blown to bits at the end. Thus several got bogged down with rather fatuous arguments trying to prove that things did go right and therefore Hardy wasn't pessimistic – he just blew it in the end! The abler candidates saw that it only heightens the general pessimism of the novel from Henchard's point of view when things do go right for Farfrae. A few outstanding answers showed how the texture of the natural description reminded the reader of Hardy's pessimism even when he was describing events which went well. Good stuff, that, and it made up for all the catalogues.

9(b) Not very popular, and of two sorts. One: these are what women are like and therefore he is very successful ... Two: it is only in glimmers that the characters rise above stereotype. The best answer I saw dealt very fully with Susan and showed that what looks like individuality on her part (in that some of her behaviour is not expected) was actually carelessness by Hardy and a demonstration that he was not remotely interested in the women, using them as tools of the plot and only bringing them alive when they were engaged in important scenes in the lives of men. Excellent feminist criticism and most stimulating and detailed in its exegesis.

9(c) Mainly lists, although a very few were able to put it together into some sort of coherent case. I found the arguments from one centre which said that Henchard's problem is that he thinks everything – including unhappiness and psychological deprivation can be atoned for in terms of money – very interesting. Mostly these were pot-boiling dull essays.

10 I find the book still very painful; it is too close to my early experience. Perhaps these youngsters have had happier childhoods, but they almost all missed the pain and anguish in this novel.

(a) This was a very popular choice and gave rise to very many mechanistic answers. The wider the range of material seen to be included the better the mark, but rather sadly the question did not seem to elicit engagement with the core of the novel or with Lawrence's methods of writing.

(b) Very few of these. 'Poetic force' was poorly done; don't think any of them had a clue what it meant.

(c) It's the last part of the answer which became the discriminator – 'greater than he himself fully realised', and it's a hard thing to demonstrate merely within the novel. Those who drew in material from outside the novel tended to do better,

particularly those two centres which had clearly done some work on the works of Freud which Lawrence had been reading prior to writing the novel. But I found this a problem in itself. Such answers were clearly more cogent, but the assessment really ought to be on what is in the novel. Those with a *very* detailed knowledge of the text were able to shine here because they were able to quote and then to say what Lawrence clearly thought he was doing, and to contrast that with the individual reader's own response. That was the most successful method, but one which was hard to follow with only an 'average' knowledge of the text.

11 Those who could analyse poetry – few and far between – did well here. It needed more discrimination and analysis of 'poetry' and 'drama' than most candidates possessed.

(b) I found as time went on that the two sentences in this question did not go together. The best answers to the first question were those that only made succinct reference to the effect and significance of the knights' speeches. Those who 'went through' the knights' speeches lost sight of the first question. In the end I awarded high marks to those who answered the question of 'Who killed the Archbishop'. It's very hard, given that the question is in quotation marks, to know the nature of the link between this question (is the examiner asking it? Or is it merely an elegant lead in to the real task?) and what follows.

(c) Not many had a lot of idea what 'tragedy' is – I don't really know and I did my doctorate on it, so why should I complain?! The trouble came when they pretended they knew and clearly had little idea. They all agreed almost wholeheartedly that it was not a tragedy at all, but a kind of glorious celebration – an interpretation which struck me as very odd indeed, but perhaps that's the critical orthodoxy. Answers to this question left me feeling that either they had all misunderstood the play or I had done.

Paper 9000/4

This year examiners had two new factors to take into account: the extended 3-hour period and the new regulation by which candidates no longer have the use of poetry texts in the examination. On the whole these were welcome innovations and candidates seemed to adapt well to them. As a result of the extra time there were very few unfinished scripts and those that were indicated that a fourth question had not been properly prepared or that time had not been properly allotted over the whole paper. Most candidates had understood that the extra half-hour offered an opportunity for thought rather than an invitation to write at inordinate length, although some, left with time on their hands, extended the last question by rambling repetition, to no avail.

The lack of poetry texts posed few problems; lengthy quotation is never necessary and most were able to illustrate their answers quite adequately. Some misquotations and mislineation indicated that some candidates have no ear for poetry and no sense of rhythm.

In spite of extra time many failed to think carefully about the demands of certain questions. For example 1(b) asks about the *importance* of children and childhood in *Lyrical Ballads* but answers tended to list and recount the stories of such relevant poems as 'The Idiot Boy' and 'We are Seven', without pointing out the ways in which they are significant to Wordsworth's thought. A good answer provided a framework of his theories, with reference to the Preface, as well as

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9(a) Extremely popular. Only a handful dealt with 'profoundly'. The less talented intellectually didn't understand that one can still be profoundly pessimistic and yet have things go right for a short time. Indeed, if things do go right for some time, then it only heightens the profundity of the pessimism when everything's blown to bits at the end. Thus several got bogged down with rather fatuous arguments trying to prove that things did go right and therefore Hardy wasn't pessimistic – he just blew it in the end! The abler candidates saw that it only heightens the general pessimism of the novel from Henchard's point of view when things do go right for Farfrae. A few outstanding answers showed how the texture of the natural description reminded the reader of Hardy's pessimism even when he was describing events which went well. Good stuff, that, and it made up for all the catalogues.

9(b) Not very popular, and of two sorts. One: these are what women are like and therefore he is very successful ... Two: it is only in glimmers that the characters rise above stereotype. The best answer I saw dealt very fully with Susan and showed that what looks like individuality on her part (in that some of her behaviour is not expected) was actually carelessness by Hardy and a demonstration that he was not remotely interested in the women, using them as tools of the plot and only bringing them alive when they were engaged in important scenes in the lives of men. Excellent feminist criticism and most stimulating and detailed in its exegesis.

9(c) Mainly lists, although a very few were able to put it together into some sort of coherent case. I found the arguments from one centre which said that Henchard's problem is that he thinks everything – including unhappiness and psychological deprivation can be atoned for in terms of money – very interesting. Mostly these were pot-boiling dull essays.

10 I find the book still very painful; it is too close to my early experience. Perhaps these youngsters have had happier childhoods, but they almost all missed the pain and anguish in this novel.

(a) This was a very popular choice and gave rise to very many mechanistic answers. The wider the range of material seen to be included the better the mark, but rather sadly the question did not seem to elicit engagement with the core of the novel or with Lawrence's methods of writing.

(b) Very few of these. 'Poetic force' was poorly done; don't think any of them had a clue what it meant.

(c) It's the last part of the answer which became the discriminator – 'greater than he himself fully realised', and it's a hard thing to demonstrate merely within the novel. Those who drew in material from outside the novel tended to do better,

particularly those two centres which had clearly done some work on the works of Freud which Lawrence had been reading prior to writing the novel. But I found this a problem in itself. Such answers were clearly more cogent, but the assessment really ought to be on what is in the novel. Those with a *very* detailed knowledge of the text were able to shine here because they were able to quote and then to say what Lawrence clearly thought he was doing, and to contrast that with the individual reader's own response. That was the most successful method, but one which was hard to follow with only an 'average' knowledge of the text.

11 Those who could analyse poetry – few and far between – did well here. It needed more discrimination and analysis of 'poetry' and 'drama' than most candidates possessed.

(b) I found as time went on that the two sentences in this question did not go together. The best answers to the first question were those that only made succinct reference to the effect and significance of the knights' speeches. Those who 'went through' the knights' speeches lost sight of the first question. In the end I awarded high marks to those who answered the question of 'Who killed the Archbishop'. It's very hard, given that the question is in quotation marks, to know the nature of the link between this question (is the examiner asking it? Or is it merely an elegant lead in to the real task?) and what follows.

(c) Not many had a lot of idea what 'tragedy' is – I don't really know and I did my doctorate on it, so why should I complain?! The trouble came when they pretended they knew and clearly had little idea. They all agreed almost wholeheartedly that it was not a tragedy at all, but a kind of glorious celebration – an interpretation which struck me as very odd indeed, but perhaps that's the critical orthodoxy. Answers to this question left me feeling that either they had all misunderstood the play or I had done.

Paper 9000/4

This year examiners had two new factors to take into account: the extended 3-hour period and the new regulation by which candidates no longer have the use of poetry texts in the examination. On the whole these were welcome innovations and candidates seemed to adapt well to them. As a result of the extra time there were very few unfinished scripts and those that were indicated that a fourth question had not been properly prepared or that time had not been properly allotted over the whole paper. Most candidates had understood that the extra half-hour offered an opportunity for thought rather than an invitation to write at inordinate length, although some, left with time on their hands, extended the last question by rambling repetition, to no avail.

The lack of poetry texts posed few problems; lengthy quotation is never necessary and most were able to illustrate their answers quite adequately. Some misquotations and mislineation indicated that some candidates have no ear for poetry and no sense of rhythm.

In spite of extra time many failed to think carefully about the demands of certain questions. For example 1(b) asks about the *importance* of children and childhood in *Lyrical Ballads* but answers tended to list and recount the stories of such relevant poems as 'The Idiot Boy' and 'We are Seven', without pointing out the ways in which they are significant to Wordsworth's thought. A good answer provided a framework of his theories, with reference to the Preface, as well as

comment on specific poems. Similarly in Qu. 2(a), although the key-word is 'progression', many candidates were content to contrast a number of poems to show 'contraries' and leave it at that. In this case some centres had obviously not been taught about the third state of 'wise innocence' reached through experience (as in 'Little Girl Lost').

Candidates would also do well to think carefully about the difficulties involved in some questions before they start writing. For example, Qus. 1(a), 2(a) and 3(a) all call for a more sophisticated approach and argument than their alternative (b) options, but often weaker candidates made the wrong choice and could find little relevant to say. As a general point, it is worthwhile spending a little time in defining important words and phrases which may be ambiguous, such as 'the history or science of feeling', 'visionary', or 'Stable and conservative values'. A really good candidate could structure his or her essay by demonstrating the meaning of such terms.

As usual, the prose texts were better understood and appreciated than the poetry, although both Blake and Shelley elicited some remarkably good answers. Qu. 8(a) produced some interesting responses, as the quotation forced candidates to examine its terms in detail. The critical analysis, (b), suggested that more class-work has been done on this kind of question, and many were able to write confidently about the use of biblical language, the tension, tone and rhythm of the extract. The novel also obviously provoked much interest and speculation, and the instances of the plot were well mastered.

Examiners complained about what seems an increasing number of untidy, messily-presented scripts written in almost illegible scrawl, with questions often not numbered, and words and sentences crossed out in such a way that reading is difficult. Usually these come from the weaker candidates, but with a little care and organisation they could easily impress the examiners more favourably.

Paper 9000/5

Although the standard of answers was equivalent to that in previous years the examiners are becoming increasingly concerned about the growing evidence of weakening standards of formal English. They wish to stress the importance of presentation and to emphasise that clear and accurate English is not merely the embellishment that some candidates offer on an otherwise adequate script. Crude and inaccurate English inevitably detracts from the overall worth of a script and those answers that are coherent and show some stylistic flair are appropriately rewarded.

There are some centres where no attention appears to be paid to the simple mechanics of essay writing and where candidates appear to have had little practice in constructing essays. For example, there seems to be scant concern for the need to distinguish between titles and characters' names, for the correct layout of quotations, and for the need to give correct titles in full. Candidates need systematic instruction on how to avoid the ill-conceived non-sequiturs and even on how to produce simple paragraphs.

This sloppiness of English presentation goes along with equal intellectual sloppiness and there seems to be too little done in some centres to inculcate disciplined

procedures of writing and thinking. One wants to emphasise that this is a matter that characterizes centres and not merely odd candidates. Although even the best centre produces the occasional bad writer the distinction is clearly between schools where, by and large, everyone writes competently and those where much of the work is incoherent. This shoddiness of presentation has now become so general that it calls into question the performance of students who, given more help by their teachers in this direction, would score more highly.

This year was the first in which candidates had three hours for the paper. Not all of them made the best use of the extra half-hour; some merely continued to lose marks the more they wrote! That extra time could be so much better used by many candidates, particularly by grasping that clarity and cogency often depend almost as much on the irrelevancies excluded as on the relevant argument and evidence that is marshalled into an answer. However, the best candidates took advantage of the extra time and were able to produce four well-organised essays.

Another general point to be noted is that more candidates are aware of the techniques required to answer the passage question. Answers to these were often much more varied than to the essay-type questions that too often produced a formula-type answer. Nevertheless, there are still too many answers that avoid discussion of writers' styles where this is required by the question. Efforts to discuss style often lead into tortuous misunderstandings or the expression of the obvious. Many, however, of the best answers blend content and style together in well integrated answers; some of the worst separate the two issues mechanically.

On individual questions 1(a) provided opportunities for the candidate who had thought about the issues that the passage presented. There were too many scripts, though, where no attention was paid to "careful study" or "is made into". The poor answers were just prepared or semi-prepared answers on Esther as narrator. It was surprising how few candidates pointed to Esther's illegitimacy as a contributory factor in her development. Despite the too-frequent and simplistic generalisations about Victorian mores the present generation of sixth formers does not in general see the stigma and isolation that this fact held for Dickens and his audience.

1(b) was by far the more popular of the two questions. It was quite clear that it was possible to distinguish between candidates who responded to the interaction between the two characters and appreciated the drama and irony of the interplay and those who merely chased off away from the passage in pursuit of Dickens's social message. It was also a pity that some candidates seemed to see one aspect in particular, such as the plight of the poor as shown by Jo, and harp on it to the exclusion of all else. There was, too, a certain irony in the way in which some of the less literate candidates commented on Jo's grasp of the English language!

In 2(a) many candidates were content with a generalised account of Gosse's development and they ignored the very real conflict that is referred to in the question. In 2(b) a number of answers failed to respond to the clear lead offered by Gosse in the last two sentences. Many presented accounts of Gosse's upbringing without exploring "effects presented in the book" which must include pathos and humour. In other words, they failed to respond to the tone of the book.

Loosely generalised answers were, again, a problem in 3(a). The examiners are becoming weary of hearing about the heath as a character more or less irrelevantly thrown in. There are other issues in the novel, after all; and the better candidates brought together the three elements of the question: Hardy's creation of 'moments', the treatment of doom, and isolation.

There was a great variety of response to 3(b). Many candidates confined themselves to the heath and the characters mentioned and produced reasonable answers, but found it hard to go beyond to raise issues of style. Very few candidates showed evidence of the understanding of what constituted 'characteristic' style and concerns.

There were few answers on Arnold. In 4(a) a number of them were able to make points about the difficulties of achieving intimate relationships and of love being the only recourse in an alienating world. 4(b) proved to be a difficult passage for many although those who did well found that they were able to relate Arnold's comments on "the best ideas ... current at the time" to 'Dover Beach', 'The Scholar Gipsy', 'Thyrsis' and 'Lines on the Grande Chartreuse'.

Question 5 threw up one of the most serious and perennial problems of the paper. A large number of candidates, faced with the range of poetry in the anthology, responded by ill-supported and facile generalisations about the Victorian age: "The Victorians were frustrated and depressed" was not an uncommon response! This kind of assertion, backed up by no real reference to the poetry, cannot pass as adequate comment on the Victorian poets.

A number of scripts, too, were intent on answering on 'Goblin Market' despite the difficulty of using it in an answer to 5(a). Several answers turned out to be quite competent for the first part on, say, Clough, and then just looked at 'Goblin Market' in general. The answers to this question also suffered from the 'list of quotations' approach. Candidates need to be aware that they must do something with their references to the poems. In 5(b) many candidates found 'Magna Est Veritas' simply too difficult to understand and some totally *mis*understood it.

In 6(a) the better candidates were able to see that the two halves of the question amount to an appropriate response to the novel; that the plot is absorbing but the people are not! 6(b) was generally quite well done although a number of candidates had prepared answers about the ways in which Collins created suspense and, although able to present this convincingly found it hard to refer relevantly to the passage.

7(a) was chosen less often than the alternative. Although there were the usual prepared answers there were also some very good ones, full of enthusiasm for the poetry and well acquainted with a wide range of his verse. There were also some very competently prepared answers using 'instress', 'inscape' and 'sprung rhythm' as Hopkins's chief 'ideas' about poetry. This kind of answer that concentrates on Hopkins's techniques has improved in many centres although we are still offered essays that expound *ad nauseam* on his 'illiteration' (sic).

The problem with Shaw still seems to be the candidates' determination to see the plays as tracts rather than as dramatic experiences. So few conveyed any sense of theatre, of dramatic revelation and of the shifting sympathies of the audience. Some, better, candidates provided interesting responses to 8(b) where they were able to show Shaw skilfully exploiting stage conventions in character and actions.

Paper 9000/6

Not allowing poetry texts into the examination room and allowing candidates three hours, rather than two and a half, in which to write their answers seem to have contributed to a higher standard of work in this year's examination. Other factors suggested by examiners are that publishers' notes are not available on so

many of this year's texts and that fewer Centres had drilled their candidates to write stock answers. There were fewer unfinished scripts this year: those there were seemed to be strategically, rather than actually, incomplete. If the beneficial effect of the longer examination period was that answers were fuller and more solid, it was also true that there was more irrelevance and repetition. The principal flaw in the scripts, as ever, was candidates' persistent refusal to think about the question before launching into an answer: in general, the teachers had seen to it that their candidates were not short of knowledge of the texts but candidates rarely consider how to structure an answer to make the best use of the material available. Candidates also still lack critical terminology to an alarming extent: they either cannot or do not define terms like 'hero', 'parable', 'comedy', 'drama', 'characterisation', and 'narrative', which means that often they are unable to make use of them to further critical discussion. Curiously enough, handwriting was demonstrably worse, which always makes the quality of the script more difficult for the examiner to assess. On the other hand, not allowing the use of poetry texts in the examination room led to a clear improvement in the standard of candidates' recollection and quotation of verse. This formed part of a general upward shift, with more candidates having the time to do themselves justice in their answers. In turn, this was accompanied by a sense that the change had most benefited diligent and hard working candidates.

Answers on the novels again this year gave evidence of engagement with the text, although at times it was a partial or misdirected involvement. On *Heart of Darkness,* not enough weight was given to Kurtz's vision of 'horror' *in relation to* Marlow's experience of colonialism; for the alternative question, candidates did not have clearly in mind the sequence of episodes. Those answering on *The Waves* had been thoroughly prepared but precisely because of this investment of effort seemed unwilling to stand back far enough to make the judgements of the novel required by the questions. Candidates had little idea of what different varieties of comedy there might be in *Invisible Man* but there was a freshness in the discussion at times as this did not seem to be a question that they had anticipated; answers on 'identity' were well documented and incorporated various interpretations of 'received' and 'given'. The best candidates recognised the interpenetration of past and present in *The Mimic Men* and could see how different models of time, subjective and objective, were at work; on the narration, surprisingly few seemed to have given thought to the different properties of different points of view. Good candidates saw that heroism is rendered problematic in *A Grain of Wheat*, although – taken along with Achebe last year – there is a general tendency to fail to perceive irony in African fiction.

The standard of writing about poetry had improved markedly this year. Thomas is not an easy poet to write effectively about and many candidates who discussed 'Rain' concentrated solely on theme, so failing to appreciate the form of the poem, especially in relation to its syntax, and the resultant effects. Candidates discussing Thomas's individuality did at least try to highlight characteristics which they considered to be uniquely his. The answers on Auden were livelier this year, although there were still some wild mis-readings and bland generalisations. Plath was not so well treated this time, since few could both grasp and illustrate the role of comedy in her poetry and since the implications of 'drama' were not followed up, though tone and imagery led the best candidates quite a long way towards answering.

The standard of work on *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* was disappointing. Candidates seemed to have given consideration to the social and personal elements in the

play but to have paid surprisingly little attention to its religious dimension.

Candidates from the relatively few Centres which have studied *Memories and Impressions* had little difficulty in identifying and evaluating Ford's departures from objectivity but they showed less awareness of what 'Art' meant to him.

Paper 9000/9

The over-all standard of work was reasonably high, with a considerable number of scripts meriting an A grade, and with relatively few total failures. Most candidates knew their set texts well, and quoted from them extensively if not always accurately.

Section I, Drama

The most consistently good work was in answer to this section. The candidates wrote well on Volpone's motives, not quite so well on the crises in the play, where there was a tendency to confuse the two trial scenes. Few attempted to answer the questions on *Bussy D'Ambois,* and those who did clearly found it a difficult play. The answers on the character of the Duchess of Malfi (3b) were almost always perceptive and to the point, but those on the last act of the play were apt to be a catalogue of what happens rather than a consideration of the act as climax or anti-climax. Very few candidates thought of *The Duchess* as a play in the theatre, and the justification of the last act was usually in thematic rather than dramatic terms. Most candidates were pleasantly involved in *The Shoemakers' Holiday* and seemed to have enjoyed the play, but again with little sense of its potential in the theatre. The answers dealing with what it had to offer a modern audience (4a) generally consisted of a recapitulation of its themes, and as with 3(a) there was not enough focus on the precise demands of the question. Question 4(b) – "Selfish...actions... under cover of fine language and romantic sentiment" – proved difficult; and most candidates tackled it piece-meal, trying to sort out which actions were selfish and which not, which language was fine, which sentiment romantic, rather than recognizing that the question concerned Dekker's overall strategy in the play, and his neutralizing all normal moral judgements by an all-embracing sense of holiday.

Anything that could be done to encourage students to think of plays as primarily acted in the theatre would be of value.

Section II

Most of the answers on Eve and the Fall were good. The candidates worked carefully through the text and often drew illuminating parallels with the speech and behaviour of Satan in other books of the poem. They were less successful, however, with the relationship of Adam and Eve after the Fall and not at all clear about the stages of their progress, (5b).

The work on Donne was of very mixed quality. The candidates who wrote on Donne as a religious poet (6b) generally showed a knowledge of a fair range of Donne's religious poetry and a familiarity with the variety of his moods and struggles. Scarcely anyone, however, appeared to have read either the "Holy Sonnet" or the "Third Satyre" which were quoted in the question and which would have given them a lead. Candidates should realize that where a quotation is included in a question, it is there to give help and suggest a line of approach. The analyses of the poem "A Valediction: of Weeping" were very disappointing. Many candidates had clearly been told a lot about Donne, and included long and stock accounts of the metaphysical conceit which were not asked for; but very few seemed to have any

training or skill in the close reading of a poem itself simply for what it says. Instead they tended to drag in other Donne poems such as "The Good Morrow" or "The Sunne Rising" and to misread it in terms of these rather than sticking close to the text of "The Valediction" itself. Most candidates followed the meaning of the first stanza with reasonable accuracy but lost their concentration and grip in the second. The phrase "So doth each teare/Which thee doth weare", for example, was generally taken to mean that the mistress was wearing her tears like a necklace, and the fact that "This world" of the last line of the stanza is the world of the tear was almost invariably missed – hence, too, the fact that the tears which drown it come from the lady, "My heaven dissolved so" which makes the transition to "more than Moone" in the final stanza. Candidates need to read a poem of this kind for its meaning as if it were a piece of prose, and very few were sufficiently careful or literal in their interpretations.

The same general criticism holds for the answers on Shakespeare's sonnet on lust, (7a) and both sets of answers suggest that few candidates get enough practice in the close reading of poetry and the puzzling out of its meaning. Many candidates grasped some of the points which Shakespeare was making about the nature of lust – though even here there was much un-asked-for speculation about autobiographical quality of the sonnet and Shakespeare's relationship with the Dark Lady. But very few identified the main point, the sudden and total reversal of feeling which occurs at the moment of consummation; and even fewer recognised the principal technique used in the poem to suggest this, the pattern of reversed terms throughout the poem – "lust in action ... till action lust", "well knows .. knows well", etc. Instead there was much general analysis of sonnet form, (often described as Petrarchan!) and the interpretation of words for their sound effects which showed a total confusion between the sounds and the meanings of words – the harsh "s's" or "l's" of whatever set of words were picked on to show Shakespeare's disgust and bitterness. Candidates taking a poetry set book would be helped by reading I.A. Richard's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* or some comparable book for an account of the relationship between sound and meaning in poetry. The answers to 7(b), on the dramatic quality of the sonnets were also poor. Many candidates did not grasp the point of the question and argued, for example, that one could recognize that the same author wrote both the plays and the sonnets by the fact that both were in verse, both used imagery etc. Only one candidate argued the quite defensible case, that there was nothing in the sonnets to suggest that their author was Shakespeare the dramatist.

Again, the answers on *The Faerie Queene* Book I were poor. A large number who attempted 8(a), whether a knowlege of the Christian faith was necessary in reading Book I, insisted – and at times over insisted – that no such knowledge was necessary, asserting that the reader only needed to know the difference between right and wrong, and usually quoting the episodes concerning Pride and Despair in support of their case. But even such secularised terms as pride and despair have essential theological overtones as Spenser uses them, and it is difficult to read Book I without some basic knowledge, however limited, of Original sin, faith, redemption and grace. So many candidates seemed to think that to know about these matters one had to be a Christian, and I was surprised by the hosility aroused by the idea of reading a specifically Christian poem. For 8(b) very few candidates had much idea of the nature of Spenserean allegory, and many simply regurgitated a rigid mechanical scheme of four-fold allegory, missing the infinite flexibility of

Spenser's extended metaphor and the very human emotions and patterns of behaviour which he is expressing.

In answer to 9(a), Nashe's moral attitude, hardly anyone made use of the quite long quotation given with the question, which did, in fact, illustrate the kind of moral ambiguity with which the question was concerned.

There was a fair amount of illiteracy, bad spelling, faulty syntax, sentence-long paragraphs, and, above all, bad punctuation. Many candidates used nothing but commas. It should be stressed that real illiteracy is self-penalising and can lower the grade given. It would help if students could be persuaded to use ball-points with ink of some definite colour rather than the pale grey which is very common. This is not only a strain on the eye-sight but makes it difficult for the examiner to make a fair assessment of a script.

Paper 9000/0, 9001/0

There was a good general standard this year, but in proportion to the number of candidates who took the paper, there were fewer high-fliers. In general, scripts showed that more serious attention is being paid to the request for the illustration of general points by reference to specific reading. This showed in turn, that original work goes on outside, but not always unrelated to, the syllabus; the variety of reading is often impressive.

Part (i)

The comparison of the poems was done better than the appreciation of the prose passage.

Q.1. Candidates found more to say about (a), and there were some interesting analyses of this poem. Most answers recognised the theme of the journal or diary; many picked out the images of cold, chill, colourless winter, sharpened by the one strong reference to the red berries. But not all noticed the important change of tone in stanza 3 ('Add in a postscript'), the turn of the thought of the poem. (a) obviously interested candidates, and there was much ingenious explanation of phrases like 'The snowflake was my father.' The simplicity of (b) misled most readers, and there were some frantic attempts to read into it more than is there. It is, after all, a lyric about the transience of man, and the survival of nature. The elegiac note was not always recognised. There was confusion over the time of year, and those who insisted that it was a poem about autumn had not noticed that 'blanching mays' and the cuckoo are hardly features of that season.

Q.2. Good candidates noted the tone of exasperation and the increasing momentum of the passage, also the extravagant imagery of the Gothic devil, the monster and the frequent references to the sea ('a capfull of wind', 'the sharks and whales', 'the tide of luxury') as a symbol of an irresistible torrent of folly. Weak candidates merely paraphrased the passage, or dismissed it as a piece of snobbery to be deplored. There is much to say about the language, punctuation and construction, but many candidates find prose difficult to analyse and write about, nor did they pause to think that the 'speaker' or 'writer' in a passage may not be 'the author'.

Part (ii)

Q.3. There was some good writing on Chaucer. The 'average' candidates stayed with discussion of their set text(s), better pieces showed a wider range.

Q.4. Too many candidates gained only a mediocre score, by following a humorous Chaucer answer with limited treatment of their Shakespeare set play(s). 4a attracted some good responses, if the essay escaped from laxly stopping at Desdemona, even by taking Emilia and Bianca seriously.

Q.5. Candidates frequently do not read the question carefully enough. The quotation here should direct the writer away from a purposeless, general treatment of 'nature' writing.

Q.8. There were some good, enthusiastic pieces on poetry, but equally this question sometimes released a series of general and uncontrolled reflections.

Q.9. Some candidates seemed to feel insulted by the quotation, a consumers' revolt.

Q.10. This elicited some very good work but too many writers stopped short with a few banal strictures on particular television versions of various novels. *Mansfield Park* was a favourite.

Q.11. Not many answers drew on theatre-going, *or* school (or other) productions.

Q.12. The least satisfactory answers to this question rested on the apparent novelty and daring of writing about science fiction. It is necessary to know something about the genre for a good essay, as well as showing good will towards popular literature. There were a few very fine discussions here, though.

Apart from a slight tendency to remain with Chaucer and Shakespeare, there was a good distribution of answers to all the questions.