

A-level ENGLISH LITERATURE B

Paper 2A Texts and genres: Elements of crime writing

Wednesday 5 June 2024

Morning

Time allowed: 3 hours

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book
- a copy of the set text(s) you have studied for Section B and Section C. These texts must **not** be annotated and must **not** contain additional notes or materials.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 7717/2A.
- You must answer the question in Section A, **one** question from Section B and **one** question from Section C. Over Section B and Section C you must write about **three** texts: **one** poetry text, **one** post-2000 prose text and **one** further text.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 75.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
 - use good English
 - organise information clearly
 - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.
- In your response you need to:
 - analyse carefully the writers' methods
 - explore the contexts of the texts you are writing about
 - explore connections across the texts you have studied
 - explore different interpretations of your texts.

Section A

Answer the question in this section.

0	1
---	---

Explore the significance of elements of crime writing in this extract.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways the author has shaped meanings.

[25 marks]

This extract is from a short story, *The Watercress Girl*, by A.E. Coppard, published in 1925. It is near the beginning of the story. Mary McDowall is on trial in court and, as the case proceeds, she reflects back on the events that led to her crime. Frank Oppidan was her lover.

While the brutal story was being recounted, the prisoner had stood with closed eyes, leaning her hands upon the rail of the dock; stood and dreamed of what she had not revealed:

Of her father Fergus McDowall; his child she was, although he had never married. That much she knew, but who her mother had been he never told her, and it did not seem to matter; she guessed rather than knew that at her birth she had died, or soon afterwards, and the man had fostered her. He and she had always been together, alone, ever since she could remember, always together, always happy, he was so kind; and so splendid in the great boots that drew up to his thighs when he worked in the watercress beds, cutting bunches deftly, or cleaning the weeds from the water. And there were her beehives, her flock of hens, the young pigs, and a calf that knelt and rubbed its neck on the rich mead with a lavishing movement just as the ducks did when the grass was dewy. Save for a wildness of mood that sometimes flashed through her, Mary was content, and loved the life that she could not know was lonely with her father beside the watercress streams. He was uncommunicative, like Mary, but as he worked he hummed to himself or whistled the soft tunes that at night he played on the clarinet. Tall and strong, a handsome man. Sometimes he would put his arms around her and say, 'Well, my dear.' And she would kiss him. She had vowed to herself that she would never leave him, but then – Frank had come. In this mortal conflict we seek not only that pleasure may not divide us from duty, but that duty may not detach us from life. He was not the first man or youth she could or would have loved, but he was the one who had wooed her; first-love's enlightening delight, in the long summer eves, in those enticing fields! How easily she was won! All his offers of marriage she had put off with the answer: 'No, it would never do for me,' or 'I shall never marry', but then, if he angrily swore or accused her of not loving him enough, her fire and freedom would awe him almost as much as it enchanted. And she might have married Frank if she could only have told him of her dubious origin, but whether from some vagrant modesty, loyalty to her father, or some reason whatever, she could not bring herself to do that. Often these steady refusals enraged her lover, and after such occasions he would not seek her again for weeks, but in the end he always returned, although his absences grew longer as their friendship lengthened. Ah, when the way to your lover is long, there's but a short cut to the end. Came a time when he did not return at all and then, soon, Mary found she was going to have a child. 'Oh, I wondered where you were, Frank, and why you were there, wherever it was, instead of where I could find you.' But the fact was portentous enough to depose her grief at his fickleness, and after a while she took no further care or thought for Oppidan, for she feared that like her own mother she would die of her child. Soon these fears left her and

she rejoiced. Certainly she need not scruple to tell him of her own origin now, he could never reproach her now. Had he come once more, had he come then, she would have married him. But although he might have been hers for the lifting of a finger, as they say, her pride kept her from calling him into the trouble, and she did not call him and he never sought her again. When her father realized her condition he merely said 'Frank?' and she nodded.

The child was early born, and she was not prepared; it came and died. Her father took it and buried it in the garden. It was a boy, dead. No one else knew, not even Frank, but when she was recovered her pride wavered and she wrote a loving letter to him, still keeping her secret. Not until she had written three times did she hear from him, and then he only answered that he should not see her any more. He did not tell her why, but she knew. He was going to marry Elizabeth Plantney, whose parents had died and left her £500. To Mary's mind that presented itself as a treachery to their child, the tiny body buried under a beehive in the garden. That Frank was unaware made no difference to the girl's fierce mood; it was treachery. Maternal anger stormed in her breast, it could only be allayed by an injury, a deep admonishing injury to that treacherous man. In her sleepless nights, the little crumpled corpse seemed to plead for this much, and her own heart clamoured, just as those bees murmured against him day by day.

So then she got some vitriol. Rushing past her old lover on the night of the crime she turned upon him with the lifted jar, but the sudden confrontation dazed and tormented her; in momentary hesitation she had dashed the acid, not into *his* faithless eyes, but at the prim creature linked to his arm. Walking away, she heard the crying of the wounded girl. After a while she had turned back to the town and given herself up to the police.

To her mind, as she stood leaning against the dock rail, it was all huddled and contorted, but that was her story set in its order. The trial went droning on beside her remembered grief like a dull stream neighbouring a clear one, two parallel streams that would meet in the end, were meeting now, surely, as the judge began to speak. And at the crisis, as if in exculpation, she suffered a whisper to escape her lips, though none heard it.

' 'Twas him made me a parent, but he was never a man himself. He took advantage; it was mean, I love Christianity.' She heard the judge deliver her sentence: for six calendar months she was to be locked in a gaol. 'O Christ!' she breathed, for it was the lovely spring; lilac, laburnum, and father wading the brooks in those boots drawn up to his thighs to rake the dark sprigs and comb out the green scum.

Turn over for Section B

Turn over ►

Over **Section B** and **Section C**, you must write about **three** texts from the following list:

Selected Poems: Crabbe, Browning and Wilde (pre-1900 poetry)

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (pre-1900 poetry)

Atonement (post-2000 prose)

When Will There Be Good News? (post-2000 prose)

Oliver Twist

The Murder of Roger Ackroyd

Brighton Rock

Hamlet

Section B

Answer **one** question in this section.

Either

0	2
---	---

***Selected Poems* – George Crabbe, Robert Browning and Oscar Wilde**

‘In these poems love is the primary motive for murder.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of the poets’ authorial methods.

You should refer to the work of at least **two authors** in your answer.

[25 marks]

or

0	3
---	---

***The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* – Samuel Taylor Coleridge**

‘The Mariner’s mental suffering as a result of his crime causes him more agony than his physical suffering.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Coleridge’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	4
---	---

***When Will There Be Good News?* – Kate Atkinson**

‘Crime is presented as comic rather than horrific in the novel.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Atkinson’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	5
---	---

***Atonement* – Ian McEwan**

‘We forgive Briony for her crimes because we are able to understand her motives.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of McEwan’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	6
---	---

***Oliver Twist* – Charles Dickens**

‘In the criminal world of *Oliver Twist*, the best means of obtaining power is through fear.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Dickens’ authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	7
---	---

***Brighton Rock* – Graham Greene**

‘In the world of *Brighton Rock*, violence is a source of pleasure.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Greene’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

Turn over ►

or

0	8
---	---

The Murder of Roger Ackroyd – Agatha Christie

‘Caroline is an effective and helpful sidekick for Poirot.’

To what extent do you agree with this view of Caroline’s role in the novel?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Christie’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	9
---	---

Hamlet – William Shakespeare

‘Hamlet is merely a victim of crime.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Shakespeare’s dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

Section C

Answer **one** question in this section.

In your answer you must write about **two** texts that you have **not** used in **Section B**.

Either

1	0
---	---

Explore the significance of suspense in **two** crime texts you have studied.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

1	1
---	---

'In crime writing the criminal is also a victim.'

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of authorial methods.

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page

Copyright information

For confidentiality purposes, all acknowledgements of third-party copyright material are published in a separate booklet. This booklet is published after each live examination series and is available for free download from www.aqa.org.uk.

Permission to reproduce all copyright material has been applied for. In some cases, efforts to contact copyright-holders may have been unsuccessful and AQA will be happy to rectify any omissions of acknowledgements. If you have any queries please contact the Copyright Team.

Copyright © 2024 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

