ENG1501

FOUNDATIONS IN ENGLISH LITERARY STUDIES

Duration 2 Hours

EXAMINERS
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This examination question paper consists of 6 pages

ANSWER ANY TWO QUESTIONS
ALL QUESTION CARRY EQUAL MARKS

[TURN OVER]
Answer ANY TWO questions

Question 1: Seasons come to Pass

Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow. Please note the following important guidelines:

Each question should be answered in a paragraph of between 10 and 15 lines. Marks are not allocated per question; a global mark out of 50 is awarded to the whole answer.
For each answer, ensure that you quote from the poem or refer to the poem to substantiate your answers.

*Virtue* by George Herbert

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die

Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye;
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die

[TURN OVER]
Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives,
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives

1. The poet uses vivid imagery to explore the central idea in this poem. Identify the images in lines 2, 7, 10 and 14. Say what is being compared to what and discuss the effect of each.

2. In the first three stanzas, the poet presents us with images that are associated with beauty, and then negates those same images. Identify how the poet achieves this negation and explain how it advances his message.

3. Identify the rhyme scheme of the poem. Discuss the effect of the rhyme scheme in conveying the central theme of the poem.

4. In the first stanza, the poet says ‘The dew shall weep thy fall tonight’. Identify this figure of speech and discuss its effect.

5. The last stanza provides a contrast to the first three stanzas. Explain how the poet achieves this change in tone. In your response, you should include comment on the use of the word ‘sweet’ in the poem.

50 marks

Question 2: Introduction to English Literary Studies

Read this excerpt from a lecture delivered by the British author Neil Gaiman and answer the questions that follow. Each of your responses should be between 10 and 15 lines in length. Quote from the text to substantiate your answers.

It’s important for people to tell you what side they are on and why, and whether they might be biased.
A declaration of members’ interests, of a sort. So, I am going to be talking to you about reading. I’m going to tell you that libraries are important. I’m going to suggest that reading fiction, that reading for pleasure, is one of the most important things one can do. I’m going to make an impassioned plea for people to understand what libraries and librarians are, and to preserve both of these things.

And I am biased, obviously and enormously. I’m an author, often an author of fiction. I write for children and for adults. For about 30 years I have been earning my living through my words, mostly by making things up and writing them down. It is obviously in my interest for people to read, for them to read fiction, for libraries and librarians to exist and help foster a love of reading and places in which reading can occur.
Fiction has two uses. Firstly, it's a gateway drug to reading. The drive to know what happens next, to want to turn the page, the need to keep going, even if it's hard, because someone's in trouble and you have to know how it's all going to end—that's a very real drive. And it forces you to learn new words, to think new thoughts, to keep going. To discover that reading per se is pleasurable. Once you learn that, you’re on the road to reading everything. And reading is key. There were noises made briefly, a few years ago, about the idea that we were living in a post-literate world, in which the ability to make sense out of written words was somehow redundant, but those days are gone. Words are more important than they ever were. We navigate the world with words, and as the world slips onto the web, we need to follow, to communicate and to comprehend what we are reading. People who cannot understand each other cannot exchange ideas, cannot communicate, and translation programs only go so far.

And the second thing fiction does is to build empathy. When you watch TV or see a film, you are looking at things happening to other people. Prose fiction is something you build up from 26 letters and a handful of punctuation marks, and you, and you alone, using your imagination, create a world and people in it and look out through other eyes. You get to feel things, visit places and worlds you would never otherwise know. You learn that everyone else out there is a me, as well.

You’re being someone else, and when you return to your own world, you’re going to be slightly changed. Empathy is a tool for building people into groups, for allowing us to function as more than self-obsessed individuals. You’re also finding out something as you read vitally important for making your way in the world. And it’s this.

The world doesn’t have to be like this. Things can be different.

Fiction can show you a different world. It can take you somewhere you’ve never been. Once you’ve visited other worlds, like those who ate fairy fruit, you can never be entirely content with the world that you grew up in. Discontent is a good thing: discontented people can modify and improve their worlds, leave them better, leave them different.

(http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/oct/15/neil-gaiman-future-libraries-reading-daydreaming)

1. In this passage, Neil Gaiman describes himself as ‘biased’. Explain the meaning of “biased” in this context, and discuss why he describes himself in this way.
2. Explain in your own words what the writer means when he calls ‘fiction’ a ‘gateway drug to reading’. Your answer should include a discussion of the metaphor and its implications.
3. The writer believes that we are not living in a ‘post-literate world’. What reasons/evidence does he provide to support this belief? Your answer should demonstrate that you understand the term ‘post-literate’.
4. Explain why the writer believes that books are more able to create empathy than films or TV.

5. Explain what the author means when he states that '[d]iscontent is a good thing'. How does this remark support his main argument?

OR

Question 3: The Catcher in the Rye

Throughout the novel, Holden Caulfield appears to be victimised by the world around him. He does not fit in, and he seems to alienate himself as a form of self-protection.

In an essay of three to four pages, respond to this statement by discussing the theme of alienation as portrayed in The Catcher in the Rye. Refer to specific characters and/or incidents in the novel to support your argument.

50 marks

OR

Question 4: The Road to Mecca

MISS HELEN is in the bedroom alcove. A frail, bird-like little woman in her late sixties. A suggestion of personal neglect, particularly in her clothes which are shabby and were put on with obvious indifference to the final effect.

She is nervously fussing around an old-fashioned washstand, laying out towels, soap, etc., etc., and from time to time directs her attention to the lounge and a door leading from it to the rest of the house. In the course of moving around she sees an overnight bag and a briefcase on the floor near the lounge entrance. She fetches these and carries them into the alcove. ELSA enters, a strong young woman in her late twenties dressed in a tracksuit or something else suitable for a long motorcar ride. (p 15)

The stage directions above reveal the first example of juxtaposition* in a play that revolves around contrasts and conflicts. In an essay of three to four pages, discuss how Fugard uses the technique of juxtaposition to make a comment on the conflict between the older and younger generations, rural and urban lifestyles, male and female members of society, and religious and secular beliefs.

*Juxtaposition – the placement of people or things together, especially in order to show a contrast between them.

50 marks

OR

[TURN OVER]
Question 5: *When Rain Clouds Gather*

Many critics have suggested that Bessie Head portrays Gilbert as a messianic figure who goes to Golema Mmudi to save the black population, while depicting the black characters as incapable of looking after themselves and reliant on Gilbert to save them and help them with major life decisions.

Using the extract below as a starting point, discuss the truth of the above statement. You should refer to the novel as a whole when supporting your argument, not only this extract.

The mention of the name of Gilbert had suddenly filled their hearts with hope, where before had been a passive resignation. No one had any clear idea of why he had headed home except that it seemed the most reasonable thing to do. But they were all members of the cattle co-operative and greatly prided themselves on having joined this new and strange association. Perhaps Gilbert, who had new ideas each day, would tell them what to do with all the cattle they could no longer feed. “What has Gilbert to say about the deaths?” one of the men prompted tentatively (Head 1969, 156-7)

50 marks
TOTAL: 100 marks

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