

**ENGLISH HL 25 May 2024**

**GRADE 12 LITERATURE : POETRY REVISION**

**TECHNIQUE - UNSEEN POETRY**

**STEP 1: THINK ABOUT THE POET / TITLE**

Although you will almost certainly have never heard of the poet in the exam, you can work out quite a lot from the name. To begin with, does it sound foreign or common? In the example above the name ‘Andrew Smith’ seems to be a British or maybe American name – there are certainly no clues that it may be the name of a non-English native. Secondly think about the sex – the fact that this poem is written by a man may play an important part of the analysis to come. Use the poet’s name throughout your answer.

Try to interpret the meaning of the title.

**STEP 2: THINK ABOUT THE DATE**

If there is a date listed you need to think about the life-time experiences of the poet and relate them to what you found out in step 1. For example, a poem from the 1600s written by a woman is going to be based in a context where women’s rights were very different to today. In the poem above you can see that the poet is just over 30 years old. This means they have lived through the same sort of things you have lived through and share the same cultural experiences: the internet boom, TV, 9/11 etc. Of course, you don’t know exactly when the poem was written, but again your first impressions on the date can be important later on.

Time period – WW1, WW2 - possibly Apartheid/Colonialism/Industrialisation

**STEP 3: READ QUESTIONS**

Questions could help attach meaning eg- funeral/ celebration/love/ nature. At this point pay close attention to **diction**.

**STEP 4: READING FOR MEANING (Literal/ Figurative)**

Read once. Then consider the following:

Is it a literal or figurative?

**STEP 5: LOOK FOR THE POETIC DEVICES**

Read for a second time but look for the poetic devices used in the poem. For example**: similes, metaphors, alliteration, rhyme, rhythm etc.**

**STEP 6: LOOK AT THE STRUCTURE AND FORM**

How is the poem organised? When do the stanzas change and why? Does it follow the pattern of a type of poetry? Is there a change or message in each stanza.

If it is 14 lines – Is it a Sonnet. Could it be an Italian/Shakespearean Sonnet?

**Theme- is usually found in the last stanza/ latter part of the poem.**

**STEP 7: ANSWER THE QUESTION**

Read for the 3rd – final time. Read questions and attempt to answer.

**Sonnet 130 Shakespeare**

**Structure** “Sonnet 130” consists of 14 lines. It is a **traditional English love sonnet**, which is divided into three quatrains and a concluding heroic couplet in the end

**Poetic Devices** :

There are various uses of alliteration and assonance in the poem. Look at the repetition of “w” sound in lines 3- 4, “g” in line 11, for example.

Repetition occurs in lines 2 (“red”) and 4 (“wires”). This, again, emphasises the importance of the colour and texture – the idealised Petrarchan woman had blood-red lips and golden, luscious hair.

**Anastrophe** (the natural order of words is inversed) occurs in lines 6 and 7: “But no such roses see I in her cheeks / And in some perfumes is there more delight”

**Hyperbole** abounds in the poem – all of the comparisons are exaggerated.

Poet – **not cynical but realistic**. Ridicules Petrarchan poets

Three quatrains– contains **8 anti-compliments**

**Tone** : **Quatrains – Sarcastic** **Rhyming Couplet(Volta) – Sincere**

**Theme : Realist love unlike exaggerated comparisons found in traditional Petrarchan poems**

1. Explain how the **structure and tone** of this poem allows the poet to emphasise the central
2. message. (3)

*(The Shakespearean/Elizabethan sonnet consists of 3 quatrains and rhyming couplet. The* ***quatrains*** *deliver his exaggerated* ***anti-compliments****, and the couplet drives home his* ***sincere love*** *– he loves her* ***despite her imperfections****. The tone in the quatrains – sarcastic/sardonic/frank. Tone in couplet – sincere.*

1. Are Shakespeare’s observations in the **quatrains cynical or not**? Explain your answer. (2)

*(No – no mark.* ***Women, like men, are not perfect****. He is* ***not cynical, he is realistic****. He loves her* ***despite her shortcomings/imperfections. She is real!)***

1. Who is the speaker **ridiculing in the poem**? Why does he do this? (3)

*(He ridicules the* ***Petrarchan poets of the time*** *who used exaggerations to describe their lovers. He proves that the idealised woman does not exist AND makes it clear that his beloved does not have to be perfect for him to love her genuinely.)*

1. Explain what is meant by**:“** *My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground*. (2)

*(She is* ***REAL – she does not float above the ground****, as described by Petrarchan sonnets, she walks. She is human, not an idealised and* ***mythical goddess****.)*

1. Refer to line 12. Comment on the **effect pace** has on the meaning of the line. (3)

*(The pace* ***slows down with commas*** *and* ***monosyllabic words****. It indicates the heavy treading/walking of his mistress’ gait. She walks like a normal person, she* ***doesn’t float like a goddess.)***

1. Show how the **last line completes his argument**. Refer, in particular, to the word “false”. (2)

(*(He* ***does not need to make false/untrue/exaggerated comparisons*** *to let her know he loves her. Or to love her!)*

1. Identify **three sensory images** in this poem and how they relate to the central theme. (3)

*(****Sight – he sees her features****;* ***touch – her ‘wiry’ hair; smell*** *– her breath;* ***hearing – her voice****. Learners must quote and explain. All relate to the* ***theme of her imperfections*** *making her ‘perfect’ in his eyes. She does not fit the mould of the idealised Petrarchan woman. She is real)*

1. Identify the **tone in lines 1-12** and how this **contrasts with the tone in the last two lines.** Is this an effective shift in tone? Justify your answer. (3)

***Tone in 1-12: sardonic, sarcastic*, *critical****.* ***Last two lines: sincere,*** *heartfelt. Effective shift – he states very clearly what she is NOT and then says that he loves her DESPITE her imperfections.)*

1. Explain the use of “**by heaven**” in line 13. Why has this phrase been included? (2)

*(It is a* ***reference to God*** *– he swears by the* ***Almighty to prove his sincerity****.)*

**The child who was shot dead… Ingrid Jonker**

**Structure** -This poem consists of four stanzas and ends with a **one-line coda**.”***Without a pass***”

The first three stanzas contain five lines each and the fourth stanza has seven lines.

**Third person narrative**

**Free verse** (lines with no prescribed pattern or structure)

**Poetic Devices:**

**Paradox** – “the child is not dead”

**Irony** – “without a pass” – Last line

**Metaphors – Lines 1,3,4,5,16,22**

**Anaphora**: The speaker repeats the phrase **“the child”** throughout the poem.

The speaker also repeats the phrases “is not dead” in stanzas 1 & 3, “lifts his fist against his...” in stanzas (**Generational Gap**)1 & 2, & “who shouts Afrika! Shouts the breath” in stanzas 1&2

**Synecdoche** – **Child** represent the **youth**

**Allusion** – Stanza 3 ***“The child is not dead”*** -Biblical Allusion

**Protest poem - Apartheid**

The **youngster is a symbol of the growing sense of freedom** in South Africans' hearts against Apartheid, and this piece highlights his death at Nyanga during the anti-pass march.

**Tone – Unrelenting/Bold/Determined**

**Theme – Brutality of apartheid and innocent lives lost through systemic violence**

1. Comment on the reference to ‘the child’ in the title of the poem. (2)

*(It evokes* ***a sympathetic response****. A child is* ***vulnerable and helpless*** *against the* ***armed soldiers****. It shows the cruelty and senselessness of this death – this child* ***did not live long enough to realise his potential.)***

1. The title refers to the ‘dead’ child, yet in line 1 ‘the child is not dead’. Discuss the contradiction/dichotomy by referring to the rest of the poem. (3)

*(The* ***contradiction/dichotomy*** *leaves the reader pondering: how can the child be both dead and “not dead”? The child is* ***physically dead*** *but the speaker introduces the idea that the* ***child is a symbol*** *of* ***innocence/hope/resistance****. None of the lives lost will be forgotten, as they are ‘everywhere’. They will be remembered in history in the struggle for freedom. The child will always be present to drive the struggle and ultimately reap the rewards of freedom by travelling ‘without a pass’.)*

1. What does the altered repetition of “The child lifts his fists against his mother / father” reveal about the generation gap that is reflected in responding to the laws of apartheid? (2)

*(The child is unhappy with the* ***parents’ submissive attitude*** *– they did not fight hard enough. He (as* ***a synecdoche of the youth****) will now* ***take up the fight, literally****. The child seeks a quick and possibly* ***violent solution*** *to the end of Apartheid as he* ***‘lifts his fists’****; whereas the protests of his parents would have been more peaceful as previous ‘generations who are shouting Afrika’ campaigned against Apartheid in this way. The youth is filled with rage at the Apartheid world they are forced to inhabit, the legacy of previous generations who ‘allowed’ matters to reach this intolerable point. Active and passive resistance)*

1. How does the diction in stanzas 1 and 2 highlight the difference between mothers and fathers? (3)

*(The image of the* ***mother refers to pain and suffering*** *– they* ***“scream****” and their screams of* ***anguish*** *are heard far and wide. The image of the* ***father*** *refers to* ***warriors and pride****. It refers to* ***“justice and blood”*** *– the call to arms to regain their lost pride.)*

1. Comment on the effect of the denials in the third stanza. (2)

*(The frequent use of denials and negatives* ***emphasises just how frequently these events*** *occurred during those brutal years in the fight for freedom. The reader understands that there are innocent victims in all these places, and the denials – indicative of officialdom – come across as* ***blatant lies.)***

1. Critically comment how the imagery used in lines 20-23 contributes to the mood. (3**)**

*(The child playing in the sun creates a* ***carefree mood without the violence*** *of ‘bullets’ and ‘rifles’ and ‘batons’. ‘****Treks’ and ‘travels’ suggest freedom*** *and no more restrictions and confinements of ‘pass’ laws. The image of a* ***‘giant’*** *show that the* ***child is now grown and has embraced his potential****. This contributes to a* ***mood of hope, optimism and confidence****.)*

1. Discuss the effectiveness of the last, short line of the poem. (2)

*(The concluding image is particularly* ***poignant*** *because it reflects a child who did not want any part of the violence he grew up in but instead wanted to* ***follow innocent pursuits****. He wanted the opportunity to become an* ***independent adult with no restrictions*** *on where he could go. The* ***pass book*** *implies* ***restrictions and oppression****.)*

1. During the Parliamentary address, Nelson Mandela commented that “in the midst of despair, Jonker celebrated hope.” Does this poem celebrate hope? Discuss your answer briefly. (3)

*(Jonker remained desperately* ***hopeful of a better future****. The last line implies a future without restrictions. The repetition of* ***“Not dead” implies hope and optimism.)***

1. “The child” is repeated ten times in the poem. How does this repetition add meaning to the poem? (2)

*(The repetition emphasises the* ***age and innocence of the child****. The effect is to highlight the* ***number of innocent people who were killed*** *in the fight against Apartheid.)*

**At a Funeral Dennis Brutus**

The poem's title makes it appear as though **Valencia Majombozi is being honored.**

It also deals with the **disappointment of unfulfilled dreams**;

Valencia passed away **before she could begin her career as a doctor**, and her family had made considerable sacrifices to help her finish medical school. All for nothing,.

\* The **funeral service is seen as "empty"** (just **for show**) and a "pageant" in light of the woman's and her family's broken expectations and dreams. By equating the burial to those whose lives are being crushed by the oppression, he expands on this concept.

**Form / Structure:**

\* This poem has a precise rhyme pattern **(aaabab, cccdcd)** and two equal stanzas.

The **formal procedures and customs** of a funeral ceremony are mirrored in the **formality of the poem**.

**Poetic Devices:**

**Personification**appears in lines 2 and 6.**(Graves** expecting their content; hungry mud) – the earth seems hostile. **Death is personified – Grim Reaper**

The use of varying capital letters emphasizes and attracts attention to the words.

The **exclamation points "Salute!" and "Arise!" imply intense feelings** and a call to action.

People who are oppressed cannot fully live their life! He calls for active opposition, "Arise!" He concludes by saying that **choosing death is preferable to submitting to "defeat and death**".

**Pun** - Plots

**Tone-Defiant**

**Themes: Defiance oppression, political , call to arms**

1. To what does “pageantry” refer in line 1? Discuss the effectiveness of this choice of word. (2)

*(Pageantry refers to a* ***splendid scene filled with colours and costumes****, movement and sound. It is an effective choice of word if one considers that the poet feels that this* ***funeral is all just for “show”.)***

1. What do the words “Black, green and gold” suggest? How does this shift the reading of the poem? (2)

*(These are the* ***colours of the ANC*** *and makes the reader see the poem in a* ***political light****. The poem is both personal and political.)* ***Personal level – graduates*** *attended the funeral – garb.*

1. Why would the graves be expectant of ‘eternity’ (line 2)? (2)

*(The graves are* ***‘waiting’ for the dead bodies*** *who will be buried and stay there forever.)*

1. Explain the reference to “hope” as it is used in line 6. (2)

*(****Hopes for the future*** *– the fulfilment of life by Valencia. Could* ***also suggest a sense of hopelessness – “what was all of this for****?” The poet speaks of* ***“our hopes” – inclusive of the reader.)***

1. What are “carrion books of birth”? (2)

*(****Passbooks*** *carried by all non-white people****. Carrion (meat/dead being****) - refers to the* ***people not actually being dead, but dead-like due to oppression.)***

1. Comment on the tone in “Arise!” and “Salute!”. (3)

*A* ***commanding tone*** *is used.* ***Salute! –*** *gesture of respect which must be given to*

*Those who selflessly devoted themselves to the struggle.* ***Arise!*** *is a command. The poet uses a* ***tone of defiance****. People need not merely surrender but fight the apartheid government.*

1. Why does the speaker call on the reader to “ponder” (line 5)? (2)

*(The speaker asks the reader to* ***contemplate the implications of this funeral****, and death in general. He encourages the reader to* ***look further than the ‘showcase’/display****.)*

1. What is the difference between “Death” and “death’s head” and why is “scythes our ground” an appropriate metaphor? (3)

*(****Death is personified*** *– it is the mortal end of life. Death is often portrayed as a* ***cloaked skeleton carrying a scythe – the cutting of life****. A* ***death’s head is a skull. Here is refers to the tyranny of a system that cuts down the lives of black people****. So ‘scythes’ is an effective metaphor.)*

1. Discuss the pun in the word “plots” in line 11. (3)

*(It can be a* ***verb*** *– to plot is to make a* ***secret plan*** *to destroy someone or something. In this context the* ***political system makes plans to contain the black people*** *in ‘narrow cells. These could be* ***prison cells or graves****. Plots could also refer to literal graves.)*

1. Describe the **tone i**n and the effectiveness of the last line of the poem. (3)

*(It is a* ***commanding/defiant tone****. He states that it is* ***better to die than to “lie down****” – to* ***submit to oppressive powers****. He encourages the reader/his people to fight against oppression. It is forceful and* ***honest conclusion in response to the funeral of Valencia.)***

1. How does the reader know that this poem is more than a tribute to Valencia Majombozi? Discuss the effectiveness of this added message/theme. (3)

*(There is a definite* ***mourning for this specific individual****, but the speaker* ***encourages the reader to think beyond that****. He addresses the concept of death in general and* ***the waste of life if a life is cut short, before a person reached full potential****. He also uses the second stanza as a “****call to arms” of sorts. He states that it is better to die than to submit to the powers of oppression.)***

**POEM OF RETURN ROCHA**

\* **Form / Structure**:

\* A **protest poem - Colonialism**

\* A **free verse**

\* The poem has **14 lines and but does not conform to the strict Italian Sonnet form**.

(Although there is a distinct division between stanzas 3 and 4, separating the ‘octave’

from the ‘sestet’.)

\* It does not have a rhyme scheme and is not written in iambic pentameter, common to

the Sonnet form .It is written in free verse, more typical of contemporary poetry.

**Poetic Devices:**

**Anaphora – *When I return -repeated***

The **personification of dawn** in verse two demonstrates how the **sorrow that Nature** observed distressed even it.

The final stanza's **imagery alludes to the heroes who perished just as change was about to take place** ("day-break").

The repeat of the first two sentences emphasizes his argument that he is not a hero.

Those people never experienced the freedom of change they fought for with such ferocity.

The use of **alliteration in the words "dews," "dawns," and "dramas" emphasizes how shocked and saddened Nature was by the enslavement of her people.**

**Tone – Grief to Anger**

**Themes: Freedom, protest, Justice, acknowledgment of suffering**

**Questions and Answers**

1. Why does the speaker not want flowers upon his return? (3)

*(****Flowers are superficial****. He* ***does not want superficial things****, he wants* ***emotion.*** *He also does not believe himself to be a hero who deserves flowers or accolades upon his return. He fled and left the others to fight.)*

1. What does the speaker want instead of flowers? Why? (3)

*(He* ***wants tears, hunger, intimacy, mourning and sleeplessness****. Flowers are generally* ***celebratory,*** *and this is definitely* ***not a time for celebration****. He wants, instead,* ***an acknowledgement of suffering****. His return is indicative of something much bigger than just himself.)*

1. Comment on the description of the speaker’s “host country” as the “***land of exile and silence***”. (2)

*(Exile – he fled there to escape from oppression;* ***silence*** *–* ***perhaps he did not speak the new country’s language.*** *He could also have* ***been alone*** *there /* **isolated / unhappy / no communication** *with home country or his people.)*

1. Identify and comment on the effectiveness of the figure of speech in “***tears of dawns***”. (3)

*(****Personification*** *– even the* ***“dawn” is crying****. Even* ***Nature is upset at the atrocities*** *committed by people.)*

1. Why are the mothers “***bereft of sons***” (line 8)? (2)

*(Due to the political strife of the time, many young men (the sons) were* ***imprisoned or killed.*** *Some young men also went* ***into exile****. Some* ***mothers also couldn’t have sons because their husbands/partners were killed or imprisoned****. Thus, mothers were denied the presence of sons.)*

1. Comment on the figurative interpretation of the “***day-break***” in line 12. (2)

*(The brink of change – the* ***new day symbolises his hope*** *that things will change / they will get justice / freedom. It could refer to* ***those who died so shortly before the oppression ended.)***

1. Comment on the effectiveness of the anaphora (“***When I return***…”). (3)

*(The title is echoed in the* ***anaphora****, “When I return”. This emphasises the context of an individual who probably had been forced to flee his home country and had to live in a foreign country for a while. This emphasises the prospect of coming home and his anticipation at the welcome he would get. It is clear that the speaker* ***feels guilty about having gone into exile whilst his compatriots fought the oppressive system.)***

1. Discuss the change in tone from stanza 2 to 3. Quote in support of your answer. (3)

*(In* ***stanza 2*** *there is a tone of* ***longing and yearning*** *– the grief is immense. He cries out for the homeland to meet him with ‘real’ emotions, not flowers, nothing superficial. In the* ***3rd stanza*** *the tone shifts to* ***anger and bitterness****. Although he is happy to be home, he realises the* ***enormous sacrifice made by some in the struggle for liberation.)***

1. How does the last stanza successfully convey the speaker’s intention? (3)

*(Cleverly chosen* ***diction – “anger” and “snaking****” – implies that although the speaker is happy to be home, he still carries an enormous amount of anger and* ***resentment towards their oppressors****. He is definitely not forgiving. He seeks and demands* ***justice for all those who were scarred/killed*** *in the fight for freedom. “****Snaking****” alludes to something dangerous and poisonous – he will* ***expose the atrocities*** *and get justice for*

*all. There is definitely* ***an ominous tone.)***