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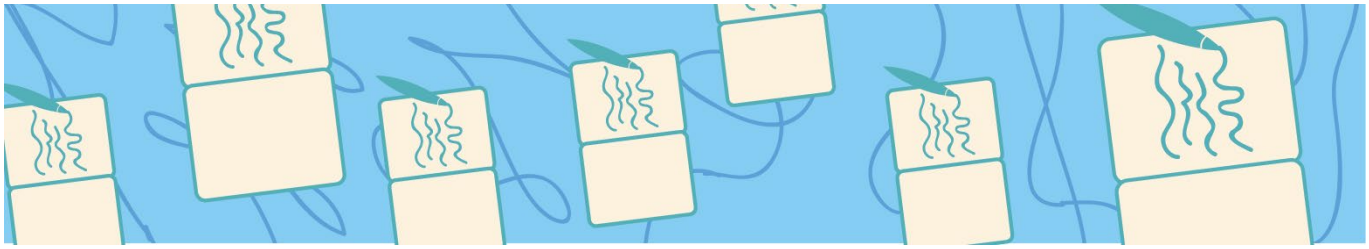
Issue 15



Editor's comment

Welcome to the latest issue of *i.e.*, our online magazine for English teachers. As you will see, it contains as usual a range of articles by teachers and examiners to support you in your teaching. Topics covered include Hamlet and Joe Orton, Seamus Heaney and Robert Frost. We have also included some exemplar work by students following our Entry Level English course. We are very pleased to be introducing the reformed ELC English qualification this autumn as it provides a useful basis for those moving on to, or already following, our GCSE qualifications, as well as catering for the needs of those for whom GCSE might not be an appropriate pathway. We are very grateful to Kirsten, Guy and the examiners who designed this new assessment and the supporting resources, which are already proving very popular in both Wales and England.

Arguably the biggest change we have seen in the last twenty years consequent on the rapid development of technology is to the ways we communicate with each other. When I introduced the English email bulletin in 2001, it seemed (to me at least), quite cutting edge. Now teachers share resources and ideas via cloud technology, and we communicate with each other in a range of media: Twitter, email, Facebook … . One of the key aspects is the immediacy that is now possible. An online magazine can be immensely useful, as is proven by the success of *i.e.* and other such publications produced by WJEC. However, a drawback is that the format does not allow us to get useful information and ideas to you quickly; we have to wait until we can put together a full issue. We have therefore decided that in future we will replace the magazine with an *i.e.* blog. It will still contain all the things you tell us you like – in particular items about teaching approaches by real teachers – but the format will allow us to publish these when we have them, as well as letting us at WJEC post too - about our approach to assessment and what we have learnt from candidates' performance in the exams of course, but also about our own personal enthusiasm for the subject. We are all still English teachers at heart, after all.

We hope to get the new blog set up very shortly. In the meantime, if you have any ideas for posts, please get in touch. We cannot offer any payment but you will experience the warm glow of knowing that you are helping your colleagues and their students across England, Wales, and further afield. Personally I am very much looking forward to working on this provision with Kirsten, her excellent team of committed subject and subject support officers, and the wider community of WJEC and Eduqas English teachers, whose dedication and enthusiasm I respect so much.

Hugh Lester

Stakeholder Engagement Executive

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‘Edna Welthorpe (Mrs)’: Joe Orton’s Alter Ego

On 15 April 1967, Joe Orton received a letter from his producer Oscar Lewenstein enclosing ‘a copy of a letter written to him by some irate man (or woman) who’d been to see 'Loot’. Orton recorded in his diary: ‘The letter said we should advertise the play as “immoral.” Intend to write an Edna Welthorpe letter to them expressing my complete agreement with their disgust.’

This rather surprising response to the condemnation of his play illustrates Orton’s impish sense of fun and the relish he took in igniting outrage and offence.

Not just a playwright, Orton was also a prankster and provocateur. Before he began writing the anarchic black comedies that would establish him as a leading twentieth century dramatist, Orton started to pen spoof letters of complaint. He adopted various alter egos to write his mischievous missives, including Donald H. Hartley, Peter Pinnell, John A. Carlsen and Jay Chakiris, but the persona he favoured most was Edna Welthorpe.

This name was inspired by ‘Aunt Edna’, the title that fellow playwright Terence Rattigan gave to the typical 1950s theatre-goer: middle-class, middle-brow and conservative. As the addition of ‘Mrs’ after her name indicates, Edna Welthorpe stood for tradition and respectability. She embodied the status quo and anticipated the emergence of Mary Whitehouse, the self-styled defender of morality and decency who opposed ‘disbelief, doubt and dirt’. Edna represented everything that Orton despised as a working-class gay man living in a sexually repressive, socially-stratified world.

Edna typically wrote admiring letters to institutions that represent high culture and social privilege (such as the Ritz Hotel) or indignant letters of complaint about aspects of working class culture that appalled her (such as Littlewoods home shopping catalogue). She presented herself as the guardian of standards in relation to everything from tinned fruit to theatre.

Alternatively, Orton uses Edna to

expose other people's prejudice. For example, she contacted the Reverend Sterry to ask if she could hire the church hall for the production of a play about homosexuality called 'The Pansy'. Orton knew full well that Sterry's religious principles would prompt him to say 'no'.

The Edna Welthorpe letters lampoon snobbery and conservatism. They exemplify satire: 'the use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues' (English Oxford Living Dictionaries). Funny but never nasty, the Edna Welthorpe letters show how anger can be channelled into humour.

Orton's prank letters have inspired other epistolary satire: William Donaldson's The Letters of Henry Root (1980), Ted. L. Nancy's Letters from a Nut (1997) and Robin Cooper's The Timewaster Letters (2005).

To mark the 50th anniversary of Orton's death in 2017, a group of top writers and comedians paid tribute to Orton by bringing Edna Welthorpe back to life and writing new letters in her name. Contributors included: Arthur Mathews (who co-wrote the cult TV show Father Ted), Jesse Armstrong (whose credits include Peep Show, Fresh Meat and The Thick of It), Caroline Moran (who co-wrote Raised by Wolves with her sister Caitlin Moran) and David Quantick (who contributed to The Fast Show and Brass Eye and won an Emmy Award for Veep). Hollywood star Alec Baldwin, a huge fan of Orton's work, also wrote a new Edna letter.

Read their hilarious letters of complaint on a new website and why not use the creative writing worksheet to have a go yourself?

Do snobbery and conservatism still exist today? Here's your chance to learn about subversive power of satire.

The creative writing competition for post-16 students launched earlier this year has now closed but the ten best Edna Welthorpe letters submitted by 31 December will also be added to the website.

Get your Edna on!

For further information: www.ednawelthorpe.co.uk

Watch Alec Baldwin discuss his passion for Joe Orton: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8__vdEN_yk

Dr Emma Parker

Associate Professor in English

University of Leicester

Calling all teachers of English… i.e. needs you!

WJEC would like to hear from you!

i.e. is WJEC's first subject specific blog created for teachers of English using contributions from teachers across England and Wales. WJEC need contributions from teachers just like you to include in future issues of i.e.

- Have you had a unique classroom experience?
- Have you taught in an unusual location or situation?
- Has a WJEC qualification especially inspired you or your students?
- Do you have a humorous or inspiring story from the classroom?
- Or do you even just have a few great classroom tips you would like to share?

If you answered yes to any of the above and are interested in having your article read by thousands of English teachers all over the world then you could be the perfect addition to a future issue of i.e.

You don't have to have any previous writing experience (although if you do that's perfectly fine as well) just send any ideas or even finished articles to hugh.lester@wjec.co.uk

However if you don't want to write an article, or share some tips don't despair! WJEC is always looking for feedback on the website and you could be a part of making i.e. the best magazine it can be. Email any thoughts on previous issues or ideas for future issues to hugh.lester@wjec.co.uk.

If you haven't already had a chance to peruse i.e. then you can view previous issues for ideas and inspiration on WJEC's website.

Frankenstein: Engineered for the modern classroom

"Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change." Mary Shelley

Upon reading this quote I can hear the sound of thousands of colleagues wincing as they once more confront the challenge of successfully navigating the icy wilderness that is our education system at the moment. Ever since Mr Gove re-engineered the organs of our subject, sliced certain flesh away, spliced older muscle in and re-created his vision of vigour we have needed the aid of colleagues, networks and exam boards to act as our Captain Robert Walton.

Akin to Walton, optimistic but aware of his own limitations, I aim to offer here a dose of balm for those suffering aches and pains with the concern of tackling 19th century fiction or older muscle, if you will, into the lives and imaginations of our youngsters.

Without the lightning strikes but with an equally excitable glint in my eye I proffer Frankenstein! It is a novel with so many routes in that are relevant to our pupils and so many rich themes and ideas that can fruitfully be explored. I urge you to give it a go with Year 9.

To launch it with a class try framing it as 'the birth of science fiction' (mildly contentious perhaps, but a good hook for some) or 'an 18 year olds first novel', or 'a novel that emerged from a ghost writing competition', or google The Hulk and Frankenstein and show them the cover image for the 1962 first edition of The Hulk comic. Even in the most unenthusiastic eyes a flame can be seen as you link an 1818 text with a Marvel character!

The novel contains such rich

passages of action and description that are prime for developing those component one AO2 and AO4 skills - the awakening of the Monster, the Monster's torching of the De Lacey's home and the discovery of Clerval's body all work well. Less able pupils can extract some real depth from the yellow flesh of the Monster juxtaposing his lush dark hair, whilst the more able can be challenged to track the subtle balance of sympathy created in turn for the Doctor and then his Monster.

Galvani's frog legs were as exciting or frightening to Shelley's contemporaries as Dolly the Sheep and modern feats of genetic engineering are to us. Alongside this, the theme of 'alien other' is sadly far too relevant in today's society. These two themes elicit strong reactions from all pupils and the variety of non-fiction texts that can be drawn in here are plentiful and allow for practice of those non-fiction reading skills, not to mention some powerful debates.

Want to prepare your pupils for the vigour of the Literature GCSE? Sorted: explore the epistolary and chiastic elements of the narrative's structure or the Gothic or Romantic literary context.

Persuasive writing with an original angle needed? One of the most enjoyable activities I have delivered, whilst studying the text with a class, has been to get them to create a Frankenstein/Monster brand and then create an advert for a drink, trainer or aftershave. The time they spend pouring over the copy trying to weave in references to Paradise Lost makes the awestruck, enthusiastic pupils in the TTA adverts look like Year 13s dribbling over Playdoh!

If you don't have the time to deliver a lengthy text fully or feel that your pupils lack the reading stamina in Year 9 then why not use extracts of the novel alongside the modern play text, written by Phillip Pullman? This stays largely true to the original and has some helpful contextual information for the pupils to access and apply to the text. Extracts of modern teen fiction can also be rewardingly woven in; try out Malorie Blackman's 'Pig Heart Boy' or, for the more dystopian loving members of the classroom, how about Veronica Roth's 'Divergent'?

If you want to extend their love of the text then share the Mel Brook's 'Young Frankenstein' film and watch them explode with laughter at the Monster's rendition of 'Putting on the Ritz'. Throw in a film review here too, if you like.

My current Year 11 pupils are proud of their ability to spot chiastic structure in Macbeth, to know about epistolary narrative as a gothic device in Jekyll and Hyde, to wax lyrical about Romanticism in their poetry anthology and look at their peers who studied other texts with pitiful 'never mind' expressions. They clearly enjoyed their exploration of this text and hopefully feel able to navigate the icy waters of their forthcoming GCSEs as more confident sailors with sturdier ships. Go on, break the ice up with them.

Written by Kate Thornton

REFORMED
ENTRY LEVEL CERTIFICATE in ENGLISH

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

Component 1: Entry Level English
Written examination: 1 hour
25% of qualification **40 marks**

Section A: Non-literary Reading
A mix of short answer questions, structured questions and multiple-choice questions in response to two or three short texts, including at least one non-continuous text.

Section B: Functional Writing
One short and one extended writing task based on everyday uses of English.

Externally set, externally assessed.

Component 2: Entry Level English
Topic Tests: 4 x 0.5 hours
60% of qualification **80 marks**

Two reading tasks and two writing tasks focusing on applying skills in different contexts.

Test 1: Response to twentieth/twenty-first century literature
Test 2: Editing and sequencing
Test 3: Narrative writing
Test 4: Proofreading

Externally set, internally assessed.

Component 3: Entry Level English
Practical assessment – Communication: 2 x 2 hours
15% of qualification **40 marks**

Task 1: Presenting a point of view
Task 2: The World of Work

Externally set, internally assessed.

This linear qualification will be available in the summer series each year. It will be awarded for the first time in summer 2018.

Introducing the reformed Entry Level English

Given the changes to qualifications in England and Wales, WJEC thought the time was right to reform the Entry Level Certificate in English, a qualification that has always provided an alternative pathways to those learners working below the lowest attainment at GCSE.

Who is Entry Level English for?

- Learners who are struggling with the accessing an untiered GCSE examination.
- Learners who need more practical support in achieving their outcomes.
- Learners who need confidence building ahead of starting a GCSE English qualification.
- Learners who need a flexible assessment approach.
- Learners who are working below the attainment credited at GCSE.

When is the reformed Entry Level English available?

The reformed ELC English qualification is for first teaching in September 2017, with the first award taking place in summer 2018. All three components will be available to centres in 2017-18.

When is the last award for legacy Entry Level English?

The legacy ELC English qualification will be last awarded in summer 2018. This means that if any centre wishes to deliver a two-year Entry Level course to learners in September 2017 they should use the reformed qualification. There will be no resit opportunity for the legacy qualification.

If I have any more questions who do I contact?

For administration queries please contact:

Entry Level Admin Section
029 2026 5180
entrylevel@wjec.co.uk

For all other subject queries please contact:

Guy Melhuish
Subject Officer
029 2026 5171
guy.melhuish@wjec.co.uk

Lewis Beecham
Subject Support Officer
029 2026 5070
lewis.beecham@wjec.co.uk

In these examination responses, two Entry Level Certificate (legacy) candidates, Deandre Gordon of The Moat School, and Kyle Lane of Greenbank School, shared their proudest moments with the Chief Examiner. In these heart-felt and engaging accounts, both candidates explore overcoming challenges.

3. Write a story using **one** of the following titles. [20]

Either *(a)* **My proudest moment**

Write about what you did on this day, how you felt and what happened.

Or, *(b)* Write a story beginning **I never thought I'd meet a superhero, but one day I did!**

Or, *(c)* Write about a time when you and a group of friends decided you were going to change your lives.

Use this plan box to write some ideas.

Title: My proudest moment

- Gaining confidence
- Feeling nervous
- For my dad

Now write your story.

My proudest moment - Example 1

A boy all alone too scared of what over people think that he cant even pick up a pen too do his school work. the teachers fort the worst of him "he's a noosence, why does he even come if he's not even going to do his work". little did they know no! litte did he know that there was a reason.

It's not easy being different expetialy when you don't even know that your diffrent. when your just left to belive that this is your fult. And your constantly thinking & asking why! why only me, but them when that boy was told that it wasn't his fult he couldn't comprehend what all of this mean's. Dyslexia? "what does that mean". to this day he still doesn't fully understand however, he can see a difference in the way people act around him. he was no longer that boy that didn't work well, the boy that never did his work. the boy that nobody wanted in there class, He also noticed people giving half harted aplagis. but that day that boy had a different mind set. he started making asparation. he was the only child in his year that was thinking about collage and A* leves. He knew that he wanted to be something to prove all of the people that alway's put him down that he was smarter then he fort. Dyslexia was no longer his belden, it was his inspiration. And as he grew up he as just learnt more and more not just about school work but life leasons that mean much more than eanything that anyone can teach him at a desk.

So now think the next time you say or think something about someone, you may not know the full story. The same way you didn't when you started to read this you sore the hand wrighting and the spelling and you fort that this was a nover child that didn't even know what he was doing. What he was doing on this earth but no! I have dreams and asperation. Im here to make my mum proud because she is the one that put me here, she is the one that fort so hard to get me into the best egication that she could, and I'm trying to make the best of that opitonity. So this is my proudice moment wrighting this story and no one can take that from me.

My proudest moment - Example 2

It was early August last year, one day before my dad's birthday and I still didn't get anything for him yet on that day. In the afternoon I decided to go to the co-operative shop and buy my dad a packet of jam donuts and I think a packet of Lindor chocolate balls, but I can't fully remember sadly.I wasn't really used to walking to a shop that was slightly more far away than the corner shop I usually like to go to. Why is that you might ask? Well It's because of my anxiety and my autism. I would usually worry if another teenager or young adult comes over and talks to me about something and I worry if I'll say something stupid in front of a group and then make a bit of a fool out of myself. Oh yeah, also roads, Busy roads. Oh and how could I forget the till itself? I don't know about you, but I find it really uncomfortable when paying for something at the till and when there are people behind me. I worry if I'm too slow and then the people behind me will get impatient.

But anyway back to the story itself. So I asked my mum if she could take us to the co-operative, but my mum was tired and thought that I should go by myself. It would show that I'm a good son to my dad so I decided to go for it. I went upstairs, grabbed my wallet, walked downstairs slowly, took a deep breath, opened the door and then I set off.

The walk around fifthteen minutes to the shop. I was quite nervous when crossing the roads and at some moments it did get a bit loud, but I didn't really came across anyone who wanted to say something to me. No one seemed to mind my appearance which felt good and what also helped was the fact that I had stayin alive by the Bee Gees stuck in my head. I arrived at the co-operative and I think I was sweating when I got there, but I only had a few more things to do! I found the things I was looking for, paid for them at the till which was uncomfortable, but after all that I felt satisfied and proud of myself. When I got back my mum was quite delighted to see me with the stuff that I had bought for my dad and was proud to say the least.

When it was my dad's birthday I gave him the packet of jam donuts and just like mum he was proud of me as well.

I may still get nervous if I ever do this again, but at least for next time it should be a little more comfortable and easier since I now have more of an idea of what the walk is like.... I hope that made sence. So yeah that was one of my proudest moments and I hope you liked reading this story that I've wrote.

"Words, Words, Words": The Language of Hamlet

Polonius: ... *What do you read my lord?*

Hamlet: Words, *words, words. (2.2.192)*

What is Hamlet to you? A play about love? A play about death? A play about insanity? The human condition? Existence writ large? A play about all of this? One critic wrote that "Hamlet is the tragedy of an audience that cannot make up its mind."[1]

Regardless of your views on how the play is categorized or how you understand its mysteries, Hamlet is, undoubtedly, the most poetic play that Shakespeare ever wrote. But, what do we mean by a poetic play? German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once remarked that 'Hamlet has within him the soul of a poet, too sensitive, delicate and complex to endure the cruel pressures of a coarse world.'[2] There is a lot of truth in this, but by poetic, though, we shouldn't just mean delicate, sensitive, resplendent with beautiful, lyrical lines (although, there is a lot of that). Hamlet is Shakespeare's most poetic play because of its originality in how it uses language, because of its intense relationship with the language, because of Hamlet the character's intense relationship with language. Hamlet is a play that sees Shakespeare pushing the boundaries of what the English language is capable of, a play that the English language itself should be indebted to. What if Shakespeare hadn't written Hamlet? Hamlet is a play in which Shakespeare gives as much if not more to the English

1 Stephen Greenblatt, The Norton Shakespeare, (W.W. Norton & Company, 1997) page 1659

2 Ibid, page 1660

language, as he takes from it.

So, it is the language that makes Hamlet such an original and unique play. We can hardly praise Shakespeare for the plot which he recycled from the legendary Danish tale of Amleth which could be found in the late-twelfth-century Danish History compiled in Latin by Saxo the Grammarian, which was later adapted in French by François de Belleforest in his *Histoires Tragiques* (1570), some thirty years before Shakespeare's version.

So, what makes the language of the play so original? Stephen Greenblatt points towards an answer:

> In order to convey a traumatized mind straining to articulate perceptions of a shattered world, Shakespeare developed a complex syntax and a remarkably expanded diction. By one scholar's count, he introduced over six hundred words in Hamlet that he had not used before.[3]

While there remains a fierce debate about the exact date of Hamlet's composition, most scholars are in agreement that Shakespeare is most likely to have written the play in 1600 (shortly after Julius Caesar). Indeed Polonius at 3.2.93 remarks 'I did enact Julius Caesar, I was killed I'th' Capitol. Brutus killed me.' In The Norton Shakespeare this is footnoted with the following: 'the actor who first played Polonius may also have played the part of Caesar.' There is an added significance to the fact that Hamlet would have followed Julius Caesar, chronologically. Julius Caesar is a play renowned for its speeches, for Shakespeare's virtuosic mastery of rhetorical devices. It could be argued that Shakespeare at this time, in his writing, was consciously grappling with new ways of using the English language.

With rhetoric in mind, a common misconception of Hamlet's famous soliloquy, indeed all his soliloquies is that it is traditionally poetic in terms of being Romantic or beautiful. Greenblatt argues:

> Hamlet's soliloquies are carefully crafted rhetorical performances. Thus, for example, the celebrated lines that "To be or not to be; that is the question (3.1.58ff)" ... Hamlet does not once use the word "I" or "me." Yet here and elsewhere his words manage to convey the spontaneous rhythms of a mind in motion. [4]

Greenblatt here is suggesting that Shakespeare is subverting rhetorical devices. In his famous soliloquy by depersonalizing it, and removing the personal pronouns 'I' and 'me' Shakespeare universalizes the speech, so that we all become Hamlet, and that we are all asking 'To be or not to be.'

So, Hamlet is a wordy play, a play in which Shakespeare is fascinated with words. However, is that simply all there is to say on the matter? Shakespeare's relationship with language in this play is more complicated than that. In fact, Shakespeare for the most part of this play is asking what is the opposite of a word? What is the opposite of language? Silence or action? These again are two concepts that are prevalent throughout the play.

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3 Ibid, page 1661

4 Ibid, page 1661

Poet W.H. Auden was starkly aware of the limits of language when he famously said that 'Poetry makes nothing happen', and Seamus Heaney seems to have agreed when he stated 'and yet, no lyric ever stopped a tank.' Here Auden and Heaney suggest that there is only so much that poetry or langauge is capable of, and that poetry and action are entire opposites. Reading Hamlet, however, Shakespeare would have us think differently, or at least brings this into question with his almost abrasive use of stresses in some of his lines. One quotation which summarises the physicality, the heft of language in the play is when Gertrude exclaims, after Hamlet's admonitions for shacking up with Claudius 'These words like daggers enter in mine ears (3.4.85)' There are seven stresses in this ten syllable line: 'These', 'words', 'like', the 'dag' of daggers, the 'en' of 'enters', 'in', 'mine' and 'ears'. This line is loaded with stresses, so much so that it takes on a physical, active quality. Gertrude's language is mimetic of the physical act she is describing. There is a physicality and brutality to the line.

The first example is when the Ghost (1.5.15) powerfully gestures towards the potential physicality of words as he remarks to Hamlet:

I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine:

Here Shakespeare's description of the word as 'lightest' acknowledges that words carry certain weights. Another line which shows Shakespeare consciously concerned with language is when Horatio in the same act and scene (line 137) comments to Hamlet 'These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.' Shakespeare is using the characters to give a running commentary on his own use of language. Another example would be when Polonius (1.2) says in response to Ophelia's confusion about Hamlet's 'antic disposition' 'Have you given him any hard words of late?' Often in the play, in fact, the word 'word' is prefixed by a variety of adjectives, a lot of them referring to weight, heft, reinforcing the idea that for Shakespeare language possesses a physicality.

Hamlet (2.2) in a soliloquy once Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have left says:

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words…

Here we get the idea that Hamlet is angry at himself for delaying the murder of Claudius by unpacking his heart with words, and that he is unsatisfied with language and that is gives no consolation, and distracts him from action. This conflict between words and action is also seen when King Claudius in (3.1) remarks in response to Polonius:

> How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
> The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
> Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
> Than is my deed to my most painted word…

Here, we get the impression that 'painted words' are a way of delaying action, and gestures towards the disconnection between deeds and actions.

By writing a play fascinated with the limits of language, Shakespeare, in turn, is writing a play concerned with action and passivity. Hamlet, therefore, is a play about language, its possibilities and deficiencies, its brutality and its beauty.

Andrew Jamison teaches English at Abingdon School. His second collection of poetry, Stay, has now been published by the Gallery Press from September 2017. His first collection of poetry, Happy Hour*, was published by Gallery Press in 2012.*

https://www.gallerypress.com/new-titles-2017/#!/Stay-Andrew-Jamison/p/91527497/category=21877007

Conference for English Practitioners

Our full day course is designed for practitioners teaching English across all Key Stages. Focusing on different pedagogical approaches, delegates will have the opportunity to choose four of the eight workshops on offer, which include:

- Practical approaches to teaching grammar at KS3 and KS4
- Understanding Reading Skills: how learners process information
- Cognitive Acceleration: embedding enquiry-led learning in the English classroom
- Making Poetry Matter
- Tackling Unseen Prose
- Developing Writing Skills
- Teaching the Novel

01/02 - Cardiff, Wales
07/02 - Manchester, England
08/02 - London, England
06/03 - Belfast, Northern Ireland

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Our full day course is designed for practitioners teaching English across all Key Stages. Focusing on different pedagogical approaches, delegates will have the opportunity to explore ways in which the direct teaching of grammar can positively impact on learners' performance across Reading, Writing and Oracy. Outcomes for delegate include an opportunity to:

- Enhance own professional knowledge and understanding.
- Explore teaching and learning strategies to apply linguistic and grammatical knowledge in the classroom.
- Network with colleagues and highly-regarded subject experts.

14/03 – Cardiff, Wales
21/03 – Manchester, England
22/03 - London, England

eduqas

www.eduqas.co.uk/training

Heaney the Teacher: Education in the Poetry of Seamus Heaney

In the deserts of the heart

Let the healing fountains start,

In the prison of his days

Teach the free man how to praise.

(From In Memory of W.B. Yeats by W.H. Auden)

While it's true that much of Heaney's writing is concerned with childhood, Ireland, its past, and 'The Troubles' (and indeed he writes beautifully and profoundly on such topics) it's important to remind ourselves that Heaney's poetry has a much wider reach than simply these issues. To label Heaney as merely 'a poet of Ireland' or 'the poet of The Troubles' would be a gross disservice to the range and originality of his work. He writes wonderful poems on love, nature, the city, classical mythologies, friendship, travel, and even the act of writing, itself. Education, however, is a much overlooked, recurring pre-occupation in his poetry and essays.

Teaching 'the free man how to praise' is a line that encapsulates Seamus Heaney's life and work. From the start it is clear to see that Heaney valued, not just education, but having a good teacher. In his essay Belfast, he writes about how he remembers Philip Hobsbaum, his tutor at Queen's and convener of 'The Group' with 'the special gratitude we reserve towards those who have led us towards a confidence in ourselves.' [1] Indeed, in 1962 Heaney took up a post as an English teacher himself, at St Thomas's Secondary Intermediate School in Ballymurphy. However, according to his interview in Stepping Stones, it was a role that he didn't enjoy all of the time: 'I was certainly unhappy... [there was] a lingering feeling that I was now a bit off course.' [2]

Some of his most engaging essays are about education and teaching, on which he had strong views. He writes in On Poetry and Professing:

> I have seen talented men and women so encased in the shining armour of *moi* that they have utterly failed to connect with the group in front of them. [3]

Heaney, renowned for his generosity of spirit, is unforgiving when it comes to the role of the teacher toward the student. He continues:

> The poet who believes that excellence in the art excuses ill-mannerdness or ill-preparedness in the classroom is offending the human as well as the professional imperatives. [4]

Heaney has left a great body of work for us, which not only teaches us how to praise, but also goes a long way in teaching us how to teach. Yet, if some of his most engaging essays are about

1 Seamus Heaney, 'Belfast' in Finders Keepers (Faber 2002), page 40

2 Seamus Heaney interviewed by Dennis O'Driscoll, Stepping Stones: Interviews with Seamus Heaney (Faber 2008), page 70

3 Seamus Heaney, 'On Poetry and Professing' in Finders Keepers (Faber 2002), page 72

4 Ibid

education some of his best poems, while never didactic, are lessons in themselves.

This idea of Heaney as a teacher is palpable throughout his oeuvre, from the beginning right up to his latest versions of Robert Henryson's fables (recently televised as Five Fables on the BBC) and to the last poem in Human Chain, A Kite for Aibhín, in which he is teaching his grandchild how to fly a kite. There is more than an echo here to the poem, A Kite for Michael and Christopher from Station Island.

At first, it portrays Heaney in childlike awe of the kite, and 'its flitter of blown chaff.' This is before presenting him as a watchful student who had 'seen it grey and slippy in the making.' Then he becomes a kite maker himself as he 'tied the bows of newspaper along its six foot tail' before becoming an observer, seeing it with a grown detachment 'but now it was far up like a small black lark.' The voice of experience deepens as he challenges his friend's notion of 'how the human soul is about the weight of a snipe.' This is before, at last, becoming the teacher directing his sons with the imperatives 'stand in here' and 'take the strain' which gives a sense of gentle authority. In the space of five stanzas Heaney artfully progresses from child to teacher.

This idea of range also extends to the register in the poem. The repetition of 'I'd' in the second stanza conveys a childlike sense of excitement, just as the repetition of 'now' in the third stanza builds a sense of time passing and the elevation of the kite. The register lifts in the fourth stanza and becomes more abstract with the repetition of 'soul', and words with religious connotations such as 'ascends', 'assumed' and 'heavens.' In the final stanza, the register is brought under control with the use of imperatives such as 'take' (which is repeated), 'feel' and 'stand'. Heaney controls the tone of the poem, at the limit of where the colloquial meets the spiritual, in the way that he is controlling the kite itself.

After Heaney's passing this poem is especially poignant. It portrays Heaney as student, father and teacher acknowledging that eventually the kite will 'plunge down into the wood' as he is aware of the next generation taking the reins, readying them for the 'long tailed pull of grief'. In the end, however, Heaney is acknowledging the ephemeral, but also the importance of passing things on, equipping the next generation with the wherewithal to keep the kite flying, the importance, in short, of teaching, despite it being, in his own words, 'as much of a mystery as it is a technique.' [5]

Being a student is also an idea that features frequently in Heaney's writing. In Singing School he writes about the joy of learning, and his first dalliances with writing and how 'vowels and ideas bandied free/ as the seed-pods blowing off our sycamores.' The phrases 'bandied free' and 'blowing off' suggest a sense of liberation in the poet while learning; the reference to 'seed-pods' and 'sycamores' also suggests a sense of renewal and growth. In the Fosterage section of Singing School, he writes 'How did I end up like this?/ I often think of my friends'/ Beautiful prismatic counselling.' Here, the advice, the wisdom, the counsel that Heaney has gained from his friends is described as 'beautiful prismatic' which conjures up images of light and colour, which reinforces the idea of joy Heaney associates with learning or being taught. The title 'Singing School' in itself could be read as Heaney celebrating the idea of school, or could conjure up the image of a school, itself, singing, representing for Heaney, a place of joy and happiness.

In Pitchfork, however, Heaney begins to grapple with our wider reasons

5 Seamus Heaney, 'On Poetry and Professing' in Finders Keepers (Faber 2002), page 71

and aims in being educated as he writes of a characer who 'has learned at last to follow that simple lead/ Past its own aim, out to an other side/ where perfection – or nearness to it – is imagined/ not in the aiming but the opening hand.' This image of an aimed hand here does have connotations of violence, and Heaney seems to be commenting on how education ('that simple lead/ past its own aim') could be an antidote to violence, and bring about an imagined perfection.

Heaney's use of the imperative (command words instructing the reader) can be found throughout his writing, and signal a kind of instruction that he wants to convey to the reader, or at least an authoratitive, teacherly poetic voice. We note this in Changes where he writes 'Remember this./ It will be good for you to retrace this path' and in Postscript where he begins the poem with 'And sometime make the time…' Similarly, Auden, who once stated 'A professor is someone who talks in someone else's sleep', himself a school teacher and professor, was also fond of the imperative. 'Teach the free man how to praise', 'Look, Stranger, on this island now', and 'Stop all the clocks' are among his most quoted lines.

Whether he presents himself as the teacher, or the one being taught, education, in its widest sense, permeates the writing and poetic stance of Heaney. It is perhaps unsurprising that he quotes the words of Wordsworth, a major influence on his work, at the start of Singing School: 'Fair seedtime had my soul, and I grew up/ Fostered alike by beauty and by fear.' 'Fostering' is a word that can be used to describe the ethos of Heaney as a poet; we get the impression that he's using poetry to foster the reader, to help us as readers to grow 'out to an other side.' Another of Heaney's great influences, Robert Frost, once wrote that poetry is a 'momentary stay against confusion' and Heaney's writing grapples with and teaches us to live through that confusion, and to tolerate it, 'not in the aiming, but the opening hand.'

Andrew Jamison teaches English at Abingdon School. His second collection of poetry, Stay, has now been published by the Gallery Press from September 2017. His first collection of poetry, Happy Hour*, was published by Gallery Press in 2012.*

https://www.gallerypress.com/new-titles-2017/#!/Stay-Andrew-Jamison/p/91527497/category=21877007

New Resources

GCSE

Eduqas GCSE English Language and Literature co-teachability:

http://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rlid=1003

Eduqas GCSE English Literature 'Ways into Shakespeare' resources:

http://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rlid=1007

Eduqas GCSE English Literature 'Approaches to Shakespeare' resource:

http://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rlid=911

Eduqas GCSE English Literature 'Approaches to unseen poetry' resource:

http://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rlid=967

WJEC GCSE English Literature - new set of poetry resources to support the poems used for 2018's NEA tasks, the 2018 theme is 'Places and People':

http://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rlid=2395

OER – Summer 2017 resources now available:

http://oer.wjec.co.uk/

GCE

Eduqas A level English Literature 'Effective writing' resource:

http://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rlid=994

Eduqas A level English Literature 'Close Textual Analysis' resource:

http://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rlid=991

Eduqas A level English Literature 'Approaches to Different Interpretations' resource:

http://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rlid=996

OER – Summer 2017 resources now available:

http://oer.wjec.co.uk/

Entry Level

Reformed Entry Level English Component 1 overview

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B40p65TD0mo

Reformed Entry Level English Component 2 overview

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R85qDVsJveY

Reformed Entry Level English Component 3 overview

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBbfiNnuL-4

Reformed Entry Level English Teachers Guide

http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/english-entry-level/ELC-English-Guidance-for-Teaching-p.pdf?language_id=1

Reformed Entry Level English co-teachability with Eduqas GCSE English Language

http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/english-entry-level/ELC%20GCSE%20Coteachability%20(Eduqas).pdf

Important Dates - WJEC Qualifications (Wales)

WJEC GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Important Dates for 2017-2018

11 January 2018	**November 2017 Series**: Results published
8 February 2018	**November 2017 Series**: Final date for receipt of Enquires about Results
21 February 2018	**Summer 2018 Series**: Last date receipt of Summer Entries
18 March 2018	**Summer 2018 Series**: Last date for entry amendments without late fees
24 March 2018	**Summer 2018 Series**: Unit 1 Oracy moderator deadline
5 June 2018- Morning	**Summer 2018 Series**: GCSE English Language Unit 2 Examination
8 June 2018- Morning	**Summer 2018 Series**: GCSE English Language Unit 3 Examination
23 August 2018	**Summer 2018 Series**: Results Published

WJEC GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE

Important dates 2017-2018

9 January AM	**January 2018 series**: English Literature Unit 1 Foundation Tier Examination
9 January AM	**January 2018 series**: English Literature Unit 1 Higher Tier Examination
21 February	**Summer 2018 series**: Entry Deadline for Summer series
18 March	**Summer 2018 series**: Final deadline for receipt of amendments without late fees
24 March	**Summer 2018 series**: Deadline for NEA samples to be with moderator
8 March	**January 2018 series**: Results published
22 May AM	**Summer 2018 series**: English Literature Unit 1 Foundation Tier Examination
22 May AM	**Summer 2018 series**: English Language Unit 1 Higher Tier Examination
25 May AM	**Summer 2018 series**: English Language Unit 2 Higher Tier Examination
25 May AM	**Summer 2018 series**: English Literature Unit 2 Foundation Tier Examination
23 August	**Summer 2018 series**: Results published

WJEC GCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Important dates 2017-2018

21 February	**Summer 2018 Series**: Last date for receipt of entries
18 March	**Summer 2018 Series**: Last date for entry amendments without late fees
14 May AM	**Summer 2018 Series**: AS Unit 1 Written Examination
15 May	**Summer 2018 Series**: Final deadline for submission of NEA to moderator
16 May AM	**Summer 2018 Series**: AS Unit 2 Written Examination
6 June AM	**Summer 2018 Series**: A2 Unit 3 Written Examination
8 June PM	**Summer 2018 Series**: A2 Unit 4 Written Examination
16 August	**Summer 2018 Series**: Results published

WJEC GCE ENGLISH LITERATURE

Important dates 2017-2018

21 February	**Summer 2018 Series**: Last date for receipt of entries
18 March	**Summer 2018 Series**: Last date for entry amendments without late fees
18 May AM	**Summer 2018 Series**: AS Unit 1 Written Examination
15 May	**Summer 2018 Series**: Final deadline for submission of NEA to moderator
23 May AM	**Summer 2018 Series**: AS Unit 2 Written Examination
7 June PM	**Summer 2018 Series**: A2 Unit 3 Written Examination
12 June PM	**Summer 2018 Series**: A2 Unit 4 Written Examination
16 August	**Summer 2018 Series**: Results published

WJEC GCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Important Dates for 2017-2018

21 February	**Summer 2018 Series**: Last date for receipt of entries
18 March	**Summer 2018 Series**: Last date for entry amendments without late fees
18 May AM	**Summer 2018 Series**: AS Unit 1 Written Examination
15 May	**Summer 2018 Series**: Final deadline for submission of NEA to moderator
23 May PM	**Summer 2018 Series**: AS Unit 2 Written Examination
7 June PM	**Summer 2018 Series**: A2 Unit 3 Written Examination
12 June PM	**Summer 2018 Series**: A2 Unit 4 Written Examination
16 August	**Summer 2018 Series**: Results published

ENTRY LEVEL ENGLISH

Teaching from 2017, for award from 2018

21 February	**Summer 2018 Series**: Last date for receipt of entries
18 March	**Summer 2018 Series**: Last date for entry amendments without late fees
5 May	**Summer 2018 Series**: Components 2 and 3 sample to the moderators
16 May AM	**Summer 2018 Series**: Component 1 Written Examination
23 August	**Summer 2018 Series**: Results published

Important Dates - Eduqas Qualifications (England)

EDUQAS GCSE (9-1) ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Important Dates for 2017-2018

11 January	**November 2017 Series:** Results published
21 February	**Summer 2018 Series:** Last date for receipt of entries
18 March	**Summer 2018 Series:** Last date for entry amendments without late fees
5 May	**Summer 2018 Series:** Component 3 (Spoken Language) sample to moderator
5 June AM	**Summer 2018 Series:** Component 1 examination
8 June AM	**Summer 2018 Series:** Component 2 examination
23 August	**Summer 2018 Series:** Results published

EDUQAS GCSE (9-1) ENGLISH LITERATURE

Important Dates for 2017-2018

21 February	**Summer 2018 Series:** Last date for receipt of entries
18 March	**Summer 2018 Series:** Last date for entry amendments without late fees
22 May AM	**Summer 2018 Series:** Component 1 examination
25 May AM	**Summer 2018 Series:** Component 2 examination
23 August	**Summer 2018 Series:** Results published

EDUQAS GCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Important dates 2017-2018

21 February	**Summer 2018 Series:** Last date for receipt of entries
18 March	**Summer 2018 Series:** Last date for entry amendments without late fees
14 May AM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AS Component 1 Written Examination
15 May	**Summer 2018 Series:** Final deadline for submission of NEA to moderator
16 May AM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AS Component 2 Written Examination
6 June AM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AL Component 1 Written Examination
8 June PM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AL Component 2 Written Examination
11 June PM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AL Component 3 Written Examination
16 August	**Summer 2018 Series:** Results published

EDUQAS GCE ENGLISH LITERATURE

Important dates 2017-2018

21 February	**Summer 2018 Series:** Last date for receipt of entries
18 March	**Summer 2018 Series:** Last date for entry amendments without late fees
18 May AM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AS Component 1 Written Examination
15 May	**Summer 2018 Series:** Final deadline for submission of NEA to moderator
23 May PM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AS Component 2 Written Examination
7 June PM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AL Component 1 Written Examination
12 June PM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AL Component 2 Written Examination
15 June AM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AL Component 3 Written Examination
16 August	**Summer 2018 Series:** Results published

EDUQAS GCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Important dates 2017-2018

21 February	**Summer 2018 Series:** Last date for receipt of entries
18 March	**Summer 2018 Series:** Last date for entry amendments without late fees
18 May AM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AS Component 1 Written Examination
15 May	**Summer 2018 Series:** Final deadline for submission of NEA to moderator
23 May PM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AS Component 2 Written Examination
7 June PM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AL Component 1 Written Examination
12 June PM	**Summer 2018 Series:** AL Component 2 Written Examination
15 June AM	**Summer 2018** Series: AL Component 3 Written Examination
16 August	**Summer 2018 Series**: Results published

ENTRY LEVEL ENGLISH

Important dates 2017-2018

21 February	**Summer 2018 Series:** Last date for receipt of entries
18 March	**Summer 2018 Series:** Last date for entry amendments without late fees
5 May	**Summer 2018 Series:** Components 2 and 3 sample to the moderators
16 May AM	**Summer 2018 Series:** Component 1 Written Examination
23 August	**Summer 2018 Series:** Results published

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