GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE FOR TEACHING FROM 2015

UNIT 3 NON-EXAMINATION ASSESSMENT

POETRY EXEMPLAR
Candidate 1

Both Owen Sheer's Eclipse and Paul Henry's Daylight Robbery deal with the loss of a relationship. After looking at both poems in detail, compare how both poets describe the situation.

Both poets show loss of relationships. However, they are very different types of relationships. 'Daylight Robbery' is about the loss of a bond between a parent and a child whereas 'Eclipse' shows the loss of a partnership. Both these losses are portrayed in different ways too.

Firstly, Paul Henry's title to his poem suggests that someone has been 'ripped off'. 'Robbery' clearly suggests that something has been stolen from them and then 'Daylight' suggests that it was unnoticeable even though it may have been viewed by anyone. The title is also a known phrase so it indicates that the robbery was unexpected. Also the 'robbery' could be a loss of a relationship as it was unstoppable.

The writer uses the boy's upcoming haircut to symbolise the child's age, 'elevated cushions in the barber's rotating chair'. This clearly establishes that he is a young child and makes it obvious that he is at the hairdresser as 'rotating chair' shows a child like action. 'Rotating chair' could also represent the life cycle because now he is a young child but as the chair rotates he is changing slowly and is growing up.

The writer Paul Henry indicates the child has changed after his haircut: 'This seven year-old begins to see a different boy in the mirror'. This shows that the boy has just seen himself for the first time after his haircut and is surprised by the difference. The word 'begins' suggests that this isn't the only change that is going to take place and this is only the start it also suggests that he is starting to lose the innocence that a young child has. This also links back to the rotating chair as he is slowly changing and growing up so he's noticing differences, 'different' suggests too that he is becoming more self-aware and is starting to take notice of his changes.

The writer then uses a simile to show how the boy is becoming self-aware: 'glances up, suspiciously, like a painter checking for symmetry'. The simile shows that he is checking to make sure his hair looks perfect just as a painter would check for accuracy. The words 'suspiciously' and 'checking' indicate that he is at the start of his vanity and is finally
starting to care about his appearance. This reinforces the idea of a ‘different boy’ too because he’s surprised by the change.

The writer uses a small stanza to show the before and after of the hair cut: ‘and when the crime’s done, when the sun lies in its ashes.’ The word ‘crime’ suggests that the haircut was a bad thing as it has changed the boy. ‘Sun lies in its ashes’ makes it seem as if something has been destroyed and also refers to a phoenix which represents rebirth. This indicates that the child has changed. He has reached a different stage of his life meaning he has lost his innocence and is starting to become more self-aware. This then relates back to the word ‘crime’ because the crime is time and new age. Also from this point, the poem is from a parent’s point of view, a parent wouldn’t want their child to grow up so new age would seem a crime to them. Lastly the word ‘sun’ could represent the child as children are always the centre of parent’s earth but the young child is gone now so that is represented by the sun going.

In the next stanza it is suggested that the child matured: ‘the suddenly serious chair that last year was a roundabout’. This shows that he has lost his imagination that a young child has. The word ‘suddenly’ it was a change that was going to happen eventually. The writer then shows how the boy is now unrecognisable to even his parent: ‘a stranger picks himself out in a grass-veiled identity parade.’ This quote tells me that he is just walking back with his parent but is intrigued by his new ‘identity’ so is looking for himself in anything reflective. The words ‘identity parade’ reinforce the idea of ‘crime’ and how time has taken the parent’s young child away. The writer uses words related to time to display their loss of connection.

In the last stanza the writer uses a metaphor to represent change: ‘Turning a corner’. This indicates a new path or part of his life but as it’s from the parent’s point of view he may be ‘turning a corner’ without the parent. The parent is losing his connection with their son as the young boy is gone. The writer uses a simile to signify the end of their relationship: ‘his hand slips from mine like a final, forgotten strand snipped from its lock’ Firstly the words ‘hand slips’ suggest that the parent didn’t want them to let go and it was the son’s choice. It shows their loss of connection is finally coming. Also this line is very powerful too because it is a relatable moment for all parents. ‘Final, forgotten strand’ then shows that the connection was being lost over time and ‘strand’ shows that the haircut was the last step until the son became mature and independent.

Lastly the writer shows that their relationship cannot be restored: ‘snipped from its lock’ ‘snipped’ shows that it was fast and sounds as if it was taken which relates back to the title
with 'robbery' and 'crime' as it has been taken from him 'lock' would represent their relationship, they are now detached and it also shows that the writer was expressing sadness as 'snipped from its lock' proves their bond can't be restored.

Firstly, Owen Sheer's title to his poem suggests that something is being overshadowed: 'Eclipse'. As an eclipse is a rare and unusual event, it suggests that what happened was unexpected and surprising. Also in an eclipse everything eventually is covered in darkness; it's a change. This suggests that something is changing gradually.

The writer shows connection straight away in the first stanza: 'we watched it apart'. 'We' shows a bond as it indicates they're talking about more than one person. The word 'apart' is then quite ambiguous as, even though it does prove something is between them, it doesn't suggest whether their being apart is positive or not.

In the second stanza Owen Sheer shows separation 'while I traced its spreading hand across the fields'. In the first stanza it was 'we'; it proves it is a physical separation. The 'spreading hand across the fields' suggests that 'spreading hand' is the shadow being cast by the eclipse. It shows movement as it's spreading 'across' which could represent moving on and change.

The writer then uses connectives to show movement: 'But as the sun became quarter, then half-moon, it unlocked me, and I saw us connected again'. The word 'But' shows change because before they were apart however they are now connected. 'The sun became quarter, then half-moon, it unlocked me' suggests that he realised a difference, the movement of the shadow made him relieved as he can see the connection again. Then 'I saw us connected again' indicates it's just a connection from his side as it says 'I' not 'we'.

The reason he thinks they're connected is because they're sharing this extra-ordinary experience. He thinks they're watching the exact same thing.

The writer then shows negativity between them 'and by the moon's shadow passing over and between us'. The words 'over and between us' show that they were first watching the eclipse together, which links back to 'connected again' as that's what connected them, but now she's not watching it anymore as it has become between them. He uses the eclipse to feel emotionally connected to her however now it is blocking them.

Owen Sheer's suggests that he realised it was a one way connection. 'It was, however, just a trick of the light'. 'Just a trick of the light' reinforces the title as the eclipse was covering the truth. He has realised that the eclipse showed him an illusion. They never were connected and only he believed that. The word 'however' expresses a tone of regret as he has noticed
his mistake and this links back to a line in the first stanza: ‘perhaps that was my mistake’. He never blamed her for not feeling the connection and is just felt regretful for deceiving himself.

The writer then indicates that she had replaced him as ‘I learnt, on returning and calling you that night; listening to your voice down the line, cooled by his presence, eclipsed and clipped’. Firstly, ‘as I learnt’ shows that what happened came as a surprise to him ‘cooled by his presence, eclipsed and clipped’. Suggests that this new person with her is influencing her and controlling her choice as one is ‘cooled’. Then ‘eclipsed and clipped’ shows that the new man is over shadowing the writer just like the eclipse has been overshadowing the land. ‘Clipped’ then suggests that she has cut him out. She has broken off all links between them and their relationship.

The writer then shows that she wants to forget about him and is moving on: ‘And then, on going to sleep, the dream-his shadow falling across your up-looking face-his shadow, falling across your memory of me.’ Firstly ‘And then’ links back to the ‘But’ because it shows chronological movement in their relationship. The words ‘the dream’ shows that he still loves her as he is involuntarily thinking about her. Also ‘on going to sleep’ suggests that he has no reason to stay up as he isn’t sharing the eclipse with her anymore. He realises he was watching it alone. ‘His shadow falling across your up-looking face’ indicates that she is focused on the new man and metaphorically he’s eclipsing the relationship. ‘His shadow falling across your memory of me’ shows it was gradually happening, their relationship was slowly finalising and the new man has eclipsed their relationship. This reinforces the idea of ‘between us’ as the eclipse was what was in-between them.

There are a variety of similarities and differences in Daylight Robbery and Eclipse. For example, both poems are written from a first person viewpoint. This allows us to understand how the poets feel and see throughout. However, ‘Daylight Robbery’ is written from a parent’s viewpoint: ‘his hand slips from mine’ whereas ‘Eclipse’ is written from an ex partner’s point of view: ‘passing over and between us.’

Another stylistic comparison is how both poems display change through imagery. ‘Daylight Robbery’ uses a haircut: ‘in the barber’s rotating chair…. ‘a different boy in the mirror’. He uses the hair cut to represent life cycle and how it causes the loss of relationship. ‘Eclipse’ uses an actual eclipse: ‘But as the sun became quarter, then half moon, it unlocked in me, and I saw us connected again’. ‘Eclipse’ uses light and dark to show gradual movement in their relationship.
A common theme is that both poets weren't expecting the loss of relationship so they both have a sense of regret afterwards. In 'Daylight Robbery' he says 'like a final, forgotten strand snipped from its lock'. This shows he's looking back to the relationship they had and are feeling regretful. In 'Eclipse' he says 'his shadow, falling across your memory of me', he is also reflecting back to what they once had. However, in 'Daylight Robbery' after the loss of relationship he also seems vulnerable whereas in 'Eclipse' he seems more bitter and annoyed about the loss: 'It was, however, just a trick of the light'.

For both poems the loss wasn't expected. Neither poet has control over their loss and have to let it happen. In 'Daylight Robbery' he says: 'And when the crime's done', this shows he had not tried to stop what happened. Then in Eclipse: 'and by the moon’s shadow passing over and between us'. He similarly had a lack of control over the situation. Both poems express their sense of loss through language. In 'Daylight Robbery': 'Turning a corner his hands slips from mine'. This shows the boy is letting go of their relationship. In 'Eclipse', 'his shadow falling across your up-looking face - his shadow, falling across your memory of me'. This proves she’s forgetting him. However, in 'Daylight Robbery' the realisation of the loss of their relationship happens much sooner: 'when the sun lies in its ashes, a new child rises' whereas in 'Eclipse' he doesn't realise until calling her later on in the evening 'as I learnt, on returning and calling you that night'.

Another similarity is that in neither poem do they want to lose the relationship. In 'Daylight Robbery' it says 'like a final, forgotten strand snipped from its lock' shows that he was holding onto their connection. In 'Eclipse' 'And then on going sleep, the dream - his shadow falling across your up looking face' he didn't want to forget or let go of her and their relationship too.

As for language and imagery choices, both show gradual transition. In 'Daylight Robbery' a phoenix is used to show rebirth. 'When the sun lies in its ashes, a new child rises whereas in 'Eclipse' he uses the light and dark casted by the shadows: 'by the day's slowing to monochrome'.... 'and by the moon's shadow passing over and between us.'

The last similarity is that both poems show finality. In 'Daylight Robbery' it says: snipped from its lock' and in 'Eclipse' 'it says falling across your memory of me'. Both symbolise that the relationship cannot be restored.

Both Eclipse and Daylight Robbery express the feeling of loss. However, personally I think that Daylight Robbery express the feeling of loss the best. It uses a range of words to set
the theme and describe the feeling: ‘and when the crime's done’, ‘glass-veiled identity parade’ and ‘glances up suspiciously’. Whereas, Eclipse is more confusing throughout as the man is in denial and doesn't realise he is losing her until near the end. The poem is ambiguous at the beginning: ‘we watched it apart’, 'It was however, just a trick of the light, as I learnt, on returning and calling you that night’. Another way I think Daylight Robbery expresses loss better is though the imagery it uses: 'when the sun lies in its ashes, a new child rises'. This is more dramatic as it refers to a phoenix, death and rebirth. In contrast to this, Eclipse uses a literal eclipse which represents change more than loss: ‘by the day's slowing to monochrome, by the mid-day midnight breeze and by the moon's shadow passing over and between us’.

**AO1 Critical response to texts.**

The work on ‘Daylight Robbery’ displays an understanding of the text and a willingness to make an investigation of the imagery although the speculation is not always secure in its conclusions. ‘Eclipse’ is more successfully handled and here the candidate has a firm grip on what Sheers is trying to convey. This work deserves a Band 5 mark of 5.

**AO2 Language, structure and form.**

There is certainly an ‘appreciation of how writers use language to achieve specific effects’, though this is stronger in the work on the second poem where there is a clear grasp of how the structure is shaped. Towards the end of the essay, there is a tendency to simply quote without very much explanation or analysis. An appropriate mark for this aspect is 5.

**AO3 Making links and comparisons.**

This section is suitably developed and thoughtful. The candidate has been systematic in noting links, most being sound and well considered. There is a real attempt to make connections between the language of the poems (as opposed to their surface content) and this justifies the low Band 5 mark of 10.

**Total mark: 20.**
Both Paul Henry's "Daylight Robbery" and Owen Sheers's "Antonia's Story" are concerned with loss. After looking at the poems in detail, compare how the two poets describe the state.

The first poem I'm going to talk about is "Daylight Robbery" by Paul Henry. This poem is about a father who has taken his 7 year old son to go and get a haircut, and begins to see his son become an older more mature boy. In this poem, the writer Paul Henry has really thought about every last word he has said, to help him tell the story. In the first Stanza, it is describing the boy as he gets his hair cut and begins to see a different him. "Elevated" in the second line could possibly mean the boy is growing up as he is "elevated" on the barbers "rotating" chair. These two words "elevated" and "rotating" both show how the boy is growing up; "elevated" could mean physically as he is growing bigger, and "rotating" could be him growing up mentally as he now has a better worlds view and a better understanding of things around him.

In stanza two, it describes the boy after the "crime's done", after the robbery of the boy's childhood, and the boy as a new person. In this stanza, I could compare the boy to a phoenix. As his hair is cut, the old him, the young childish boy, is destroyed and the new older looking and mature boy is created. I think the word "crime" is effective here as it is used to describe the barber taking away his childhood as he cuts his "blond unswept curls" from his head, and as they fall, so do the memories.

In the third stanza, the boy and his father are on their way back to the car. The boy looks into a window and finds a stranger looking back at him. This shows he no longer recognises himself, as he is now all grown up, and is starting his new journey as a man. In the final stanza, this is the moment where he himself and his father both realise that the boy is no longer a boy, but now is a man instead. We, the readers, notice this as the first line describes the father and son "turning a corner", back to the car. "Turning a corner" could also mean them "turning a corner" in their lives. The second line of this stanza also backs up my thoughts of them "turning a corner" in their lives, as it then says "his hand slips from mine", which points out that the boy is grown up now and no longer needs his dad anymore.
And therefore I think this poem is based on loss of love, as the father loses his love for the younger, more childish boy, and falls in love over again with the older looking and more mature boy his son has become.

The second poem I'm going to speak about is "Antonia's Story" by Owen Sheers. This poem is about a husband who has gone out drinking and when he has returned home his wife (Antonia) has locked him out. And when she woke up that morning she opened the door to see a policeman and her dead husband lying on the lawn.

In the first stanza it describes her husband banging on the door and how she fell asleep to it. "Dull thuds" in the first line is an onomatopoeia. The word "Dull" to me could possibly mean pointless or angrily. This could possibly show how the husband was banging on the door even though he knew it was pointless because she wasn't coming. "Dull thuds" in this line is also used to describe how Antonia walks up the stairs angry and ashamed with her husband.

This poem also gives a hint of violence to us the readers, possibly showing why she didn't open the door, because she could have been afraid. The two words "heart" and "blood" also gives us references to violence between them.

In case you didn’t know already her husband died after trying climb the gutter and he fell. And in stanza two the wife (Antonia) falling asleep dreaming of an "apple ripening, then falling a fall", possible referring to her husband when he climbed the gutter and fell like a ripe apple.

The way she woke up to the "sound of fists on the door" and how they surprised her "by the persistence of love." Because she believed it was her husband, she believed he wasn't learning, and when she opened the door and saw a policeman standing there with her husband lying still on the lawn, she was shocked, and possibly felt guilty as it was mainly her fault.

We see her feeling this again in the eighth stanza when it says "How her feet echo, dull on the stairs, as she climbs to bed. The word echo, could possibly show how she is feeling alone as all her memories are echoing around the house, making her feel guilty and alone.

And finally in the last stanza, the word "ripe" in the first line could possibly show how the deed is done, and there's no going back now.
And therefore I believe the poem is about loss of love again, as the wife has lost her husband who she loved, but unlike the other poem she now has no-one else she can carry on to love like the father did in the other poem.

Whilst comparing these two poems you can see that there are many things that can relate to each other and make a good comparison.

In both poems, I believe that both titles are relevant to their poems. The title "Daylight Robbery" basically summarises up the story of the poem as it shows how the robbery of the boy’s childhood, was in fact a good thing, as most bad robberies take place at night whereas this took place in daylight, shows that nothing wrong was done here. This title is also a very negative title which is opposite to the poem as the poem is a very positive poem, whereas the title "Antonia's Story" sounds positive, and in fact the poem is very negative. Therefore I believe that these titles are suitable, as it takes you by surprise when you read the poem and find out that it in fact isn’t a negative/positive poem.

But by comparing these poems, you also see there are many differences with them as well. Some of them being the locations they were set, time of day etc. The poem "Daylight robbery" was set at the hairdresser in the day, as you can probably tell by the title, whereas the poem "Antonia's story" is set at her home in the nighttime. And because it set in the night it gives us the image there is a violent, dull mood hovering about. And because the poem "Daylight robbery" is set in the day it gives us the feeling that there is a happy mood about.

In conclusion I believe the poem "Daylight robbery" is the much better poem, as it is a much happier and fun poem to read compared to the poem "Antonia's story".

AO1 Critical response to texts

The work on ‘Daylight Robbery’ is clear and direct showing the candidate has a firm grasp of the text and is beginning to investigate how the language shapes the response. The structural approach is sensible and gives the writer the best chance of covering the assessment criteria. This is true of the work on the second poem as well though here some of the detail is less well investigated. Overall understanding is, however, apparent and the work deserves a mark of 4. There is ‘detailed reference to text’ and the ideas are conveyed ‘clearly and appropriately’.
AO2. Language, structure and form.

Throughout the work on both poems, there is evidence of ‘appreciation of how meanings and ideas are conveyed’ though this is stronger in the early part of the essay. Investigation of ‘Antonia’s Story’ is less secure and some detail is missed while other parts are not considered very deeply, for example, the ‘apple ripening’ image and the ‘persistence of love’ repetition. Work on this text tends to be more superficial. A mark of 4 is appropriate.

AO3 Making links and comparisons.

This is the weakest aspect of the work. The candidate makes one clear link about the titles and a rather less substantial comparison based on the times of day the poems are set in. There is little about the way the theme of the task (Loss and Love) is illustrated and explored in the poems. The assessment belongs in Band 3 with a mark of 5.

Total mark: 13.
Both Jean Earle, (Jugged Hare) and John Ormond’s (In September) deal with love relationships. Investigate how the two poets describe this state.

The first poem I'm looking at is ‘In September’ where this is to do with love, a wedding theme the couple got married in 1946 in September which is the month of harvest, the month where you gather everything for the winter ahead. It almost suggests that you need a woman to survive the winter (love). He thinks about how much he loves September and her, he says 'again the golden month,' their wedding anniversary. In this poem, it shows that he has strong love and passion for her, the quote he uses to show this is "my love, my shelter, my good roof over me, my strong wall against winter." This is like she is the perfect girl that you want to be with all the time.

In the third paragraph, he says three words, "multiply my joy". This suggests that he wants kids with her. In this poem he uses the word 'Be' six times forcing her to be this and that. [This is repetition because he wants her to be the perfect wife, and they are imperative. They use a lot of adjectives and nouns in this poem. Adjectives would represent the happy marriage and the nouns show passion, earn a living and the serenity of the marriage. At the end of the poem he says "My twelve month long desire". This could be that he desires her and the last and start word are "Again" and "desire" maybe this shows I have to desire you because of this month.]

The second poem is called Jugged Hare which is like in hate relationships. It was made by Jean Earle born 1909 to 2002 in Rhondda Valley, lived and worked near Carmarthen. [She is preparing a meal which is to do with the hare and she feels sorry as she cutting it up and she would do it softly. It says she is tender lady which in my opinion she was out of place. A quote that says "Her rings sparked in and out", that would be a sign of that she is still married. She uses the words "sacrificial gravy" which is a bottle of port. You use this on special occasions.]
On the third paragraph she says "Tossed the heart to the cat" which could mean that she is bored with the relationship and sick of it almost and the cat could mean that’s the only one she care more about than him. After she made the feast she became a lover, the quotes used were "Deeply enhanced, I heard them go to bed, kissing and heard her sob" which would mean that she heard an orgasm after she laid there in dark and in the breath of the hare. The sign of death in the atmosphere of the room. She hated the marriage almost. She wanted to break free but she wanted him. The two words were "she understood".

Now comparing the two poems together to see the comparison they may have. The title could be that the title In September and Jugged Hare the year of harvest and the year of harvest and the hares would come out in September, autumn. The themes have a normal relationship and a hate relationship. The characters could be that the women is the one who is preparing the meal for the man and the man would be in September showing that man desires her and she does not. The atmosphere has hate, death and love. The overall impact is that the man loves her and would do anything and the women wants to leave and not be part of this no more.

Commentary

AO1 Critical response to text

The understanding of “Jugged Hare” is uncertain though the work on ‘In September’ is stronger. The candidate can pick up some surface details with a basic narrative approach but some misreadings are evident in the work on the former poem. While the contextualisation of the situation is handled quite well in John Ormond’s poem, it is rather vague and unclear in the work on ‘Jugged Hare’ leading to some confusion about the content. This deserves a Band 3 mark of 3. There is ‘some understanding of the main features’.
**AO2 Language, Structure and form.**

There is some limited attempt to engage with the language of the poems though the analysis is not strong. Quotations are selected appropriately but the emphasis is on surface meaning. Investigation of the way the imagery works is less secure. A Band 2 mark of 2 reflects the achievement here.

**AO3 Making links and comparisons.**

This aspect is confined to the last paragraph of the essay and after an initial very simple point, the candidate does not make it clear which poem her/his remarks refer to as can be seen in the last three sentences. The work matches the Band 1 criterion ‘Candidates show limited ability to make comparisons’. Here a mark of 2 is appropriate.

**Total:** 7.