



AP[®] English Literature and Composition 2003 Free-Response Questions

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2003 AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

The following poems are both concerned with Eros, the god of love in Greek mythology. Read the poems carefully. Then write an essay in which you compare and contrast the two concepts of Eros and analyze the techniques used to create them.

ΕΡΩΣ¹

Why hast thou nothing in thy face?
Thou idol of the human race,
Thou tyrant of the human heart,
Line The flower of lovely youth that art;
5 Yea, and that standest in thy youth
An image of eternal Truth,
With thy exuberant flesh so fair,
That only Pheidias² might compare,
Ere from his chaste marmoreal³ form
10 Time had decayed the colours warm;
Like to his gods in thy proud dress,
Thy starry sheen of nakedness.

Surely thy body is thy mind,
For in thy face is nought to find,
15 Only thy soft unchristen'd smile,
That shadows neither love nor guile,
But shameless will and power immense,
In secret sensuous innocence.

O king of joy, what is thy thought?
20 I dream thou knowest it is nought,
And wouldst in darkness come, but thou
Makest the light where'er thou go.
Ah yet no victim of thy grace,
None who e'er long'd for thy embrace,
25 Hath cared to look upon thy face.

—Robert Bridges (1899)

Eros

I call for love
But help me, who arrives?
This thug with broken nose
Line And squinty eyes.
5 'Eros, my bully boy,
Can this be you,
With boxer lips
And patchy wings askew?'

'Madam,' cries Eros,
10 'Know the brute you see
Is what long overuse
Has made of me.
My face that so offends you
Is the sum
15 Of blows your lust delivered
One by one.

We slaves who are immortal
Gloss your fate
And are the archetypes
20 That you create.
Better my battered visage,
Bruised but hot,
Than love dissolved in loss
Or left to rot.'

—Anne Stevenson (1990)

Anne Stevenson, *Collected Poems*
1955-1995, Bloodaxe Books, 2000.

¹ Eros (in Greek)

² Greek sculptor of the fifth century B.C.

³ marble

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Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

The following passage is an excerpt from “The Other Paris,” a short story by the Canadian writer Mavis Gallant. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, explain how the author uses narrative voice and characterization to provide social commentary.

Line
5 If anyone had asked Carol at what precise moment she fell in love, or where Howard Mitchell proposed to her, she would have imagined, quite sincerely, a scene that involved all at once the Seine, moonlight, barrows of violets, acacias in flower, and a confused, misty background of the Eiffel tower and little crooked streets. This was what everyone expected, and she had nearly come to believe it herself.

10 Actually, he had proposed at lunch, over a tuna-fish salad. He and Carol had known each other less than three weeks, and their conversation, until then, had been limited to their office—an American government agency—and the people in it. Carol was twenty-two; no one had proposed to her before, except an unsuitable medical student with no money and eight years’ training still to go. She was under the illusion that in a short time she would be so old no one would ask her again. She accepted at once, and Howard celebrated by ordering an extra bottle of wine. Both would have liked champagne, as a more emphatic symbol of the unusual, but each was too diffident to suggest it.

25 The fact that Carol was not in love with Howard Mitchell did not dismay her in the least. From a series of helpful college lectures on marriage she had learned that a common interest, such as a liking for Irish setters, was the true basis for happiness, and that the illusion of love was a blight imposed by the film industry, and almost entirely responsible for the high rate of divorce. Similar economic backgrounds, financial security, belonging to the same church—these were the pillars of the married union. By an astonishing coincidence, the fathers of Carol and Howard were both attorneys and both had been defeated in their one attempt to get elected a judge. Carol and Howard were both vaguely Protestant, although a serious discussion of religious beliefs would have gravely embarrassed them. And Howard, best of all, was sober, old enough to know his own mind, and absolutely reliable. He was an economist who had sense enough to attach himself to a corporation that continued to pay his salary during his loan to the government. There was no reason for the engagement or the marriage to fail.

45 Carol, with great efficiency, nearly at once set about the business of falling in love. Love required only the right conditions, like a geranium. It would wither exposed to bad weather or in dismal surroundings; indeed, Carol rated the chances of love in a cottage or a furnished room at zero. Given a good climate, enough money, and a pair of good-natured, intelligent (her college lectures had stressed this) people, one had only to sit back and watch it grow. All winter, then, she looked for these right conditions in Paris. When, at first, nothing happened, she blamed it on the weather. She was often convinced she would fall deeply in love with Howard if only it would stop raining. Undaunted, she waited for better times.

60 Howard had no notion of any of this. His sudden proposal to Carol had been quite out of character—he was uncommonly cautious—and he alternated between a state of numbness and a state of self-congratulation. Before his engagement he had sometimes been lonely, a malaise he put down to overwork, and he was discontented with his bachelor households, for he did not enjoy collecting old pottery or making little casserole dishes. Unless he stumbled on a competent housemaid, nothing ever got done. This in itself would not have spurred him into marriage had he not been seriously unsettled by the visit of one of his sisters, who advised him to marry some nice girl before it was too late. “Soon,” she told him, “you’ll just be a person who fills in at dinner.”

75 Howard saw the picture at once, and was deeply moved by it.

(1953)

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Question 3

(Suggested time— 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

According to critic Northrop Frye, “Tragic heroes are so much the highest points in their human landscape that they seem the inevitable conductors of the power about them, great trees more likely to be struck by lightning than a clump of grass. Conductors may of course be instruments as well as victims of the divine lightning.”

Select a novel or play in which a tragic figure functions as an instrument of the suffering of others. Then write an essay in which you explain how the suffering brought upon others by that figure contributes to the tragic vision of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another novel or play of comparable quality. Avoid mere plot summary.

An American Tragedy
Anna Karenina
Antigone
Beloved
Crime and Punishment
Death of a Salesman
Ethan Frome
Faust
Fences
For Whom the Bell Tolls
Frankenstein
Hedda Gabler
King Lear

Light in August
Long Day’s Journey into Night
Lord Jim
Macbeth
Medea
Moby-Dick
Oedipus Rex
Phèdre
Ragtime
Sent for You Yesterday
Tess of the D’Urbervilles
Things Fall Apart

END OF EXAMINATION