

91098



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

2

SUPERVISOR'S USE ONLY

## Level 2 English, 2014

### 91098 Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence

9.30 am Thursday 13 November 2014

Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence.	Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s) convincingly, supported by evidence.	Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s) perceptively, supported by evidence.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**You should answer ONE of the essay questions in this booklet.**

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

Merit

TOTAL

5

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Question number:

Written text type(s):

Tick (✓) your selection.

Novel

Drama

Poetry/song lyric

Non-fiction

Short story

Digital/online text

Print media

Title(s): Of course when they ask for poems of the  
'Realities' of black women

Author(s):

Grace Nichols

## PLANNING

idea - danger of a stereotype  
 - restricting nature  
 - overcoming not accepting victim  
 mentality

Reader reaction

- shock
- disappointed
- irritated
- hope
- guilty

Para 1

- confronting stereotype

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Para 2

- ~~Questioning~~ ~~grouping~~ limitations

Para 3

- Grouping

Para 4 to

- hope

Your essay should be at least 350 words long. The quality of your analysis is more important than the length of your essay.

Your essay should include:

- an **introduction** that states the focus of your essay
- **key points** related to the question, supported by examples and quotations
- a **conclusion** that focuses on your argument.

Support the points you make with **specific details** from the text(s).

Begin your written text(s) essay here:

Being stereotyped can make one feel cheated and misrepresented. In the poem "Of course when they ask for poems about the 'Realities' of black women", written by Grace Nichols, she investigates the idea of the dangers of a stereotype and the importance of breaking free from the victim mentality by rising above the oppression. Nichols uses a variety of language techniques to <sup>shape and</sup> communicate the idea, and in doing so <sup>makes</sup> ~~takes~~ the reader feel and have a combination of reactions to the text. ~~Throughout the text~~

At the very beginning, Nichols confronts the inflictors of the stereotypes by addressing not only the general public but anyone who stereotypes. This poem is written in response to a book club request in relation to an account of the 'realities' of black women - unemployed, minimum wage income and despoiled. Nichols uses the accusatory pronoun 'they'

This assuming group of people and directs this poem at them. She expresses their desire 'what they really want is a specimen whose heart is in the dust', this metaphor illustrates the common stereotype. <sup>The use of the</sup> ~~of which the~~ term 'specimen' dehumanizes the individual, and instead refers to something which is unknown, something to study. The heart is the symbol of love and is used to describe the home of the soul, to have such an important feature 'in the dust', suggests emotional defeat, whose self-esteem is unattainable. Nichols refers to this, as this is what the 'book club' want to hear, and to be reinforced that this idea is true.

Nichols recognises the desires of the request, to give proof and reinforce the idea of the stereotype. She writes 'validation of the abused stereotype already in their heads'. This shocks the reader and makes them reflect on when they may have assumed the stereotype as it is the state that they feel comfortable with. The combination of these two phrases make the reader realise how frequently the stereotype is used. The word 'abused' refers to the overuse of the stereotype and also the stereotype of the abused victim of family violence. Nichols use of specific techniques make the reader become aware of the unquestioned existence of the stereotype in our society and instead get them to question it.

Nichols then goes on to reveal the dangers of the stereotype and reductive nature it has on an individual. She states the reason behind why the stereotyped is maintained even in a forever advancing society 'mother-of-suffer'. This refers to the cycle of the stereotype that ~~is inherited~~ it is something you inherit with your family name and race, in-escapable. accompanied with the words 'trampled/oppressed' describes the state of mind and restrictions the individual feels. This causes the reader to feel sorry for the individual and regretful if they had ever stereotyped someone as they realise the limitations and restrictions placed on that individual upon doing so.

Nichols then goes onto expose the absurdity of grouping individuals and therefore making assumptions based on a person <sup>use of personal pronoun</sup> gender, race and colour. She state her opinion 'I say I can write no poem to hold the essence of a black woman or a white woman or a green woman'. This triple construction uses colour in a arbitrary manner along with the use of sarcasm as a green woman is impossible, just like <sup>all</sup> grouping black woman together or ~~white~~ white woman for that matter. She tries to demonstrate the diversity

of woman by using a simile 'like a contrasting sky of rainbow spectrum', which likens it to the sky in aspect of our world which is vast, limitless and forever changing. By doing this she encourages to reader to think this of all humans, non-judgmental just like the do the sky.

Nichols ~~then~~ introduces the idea of refusing the stereotype, "I cannot subscribe to the victim mentality" by not succumbing to it and instead inspires hope in her last stanza. She describes her ideal "we black women full-of-ourselves walking crushing out with each dancing step", her conjunctive verb suggesting that women hold their heads up high and show the pride they hold, through their body language. The 'crushing out with each dancing step', is intended to demonstrate the idea of pushing outside the boundaries. It is also repeated twice in the stanza to reinforce the actions of liberation, determination and raising above oppression with the vivid verbs 'crushing' and 'dancing'. This last stanza makes the reader feel inspired by these ideas. They are left feeling hopeful and with the will to not only change themselves but also society.

In this poem Nichols uses strong and powerful language techniques to shape how we react ~~and~~ and feel towards the ideas she introduces

through out. She makes us realise the dangers of the stereotype and shocks us with the blatant truth of how society treats the stereotyped. She allows us to question and reflect the absurdity of the action and inspires us to make a change to how we treat others in the future.

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**Merit**

**TOTAL**

**6**

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Question number:

Written text type(s):  Novel  Drama  Poetry/song lyric  
 Tick (✓) your selection.  Non-fiction  Short story  Digital/online text  
 Print media

Title(s): *Unknown Girl in the Maternity Ward*

Author(s): *Anne Sexton*

**PLANNING** → imagery, structure, tone

Analyse how language features were used to reveal the attitudes of one or more characters in the written text

- bone of my bone <sup>stigma surrounding unmarried motherhood</sup>
- I touch your cheek like flowers
- The purses reach their caps you are <sup>shepherded</sup> down
- They want to know the facts
- The doctors return to scold me
- The noble they ask of me
- Pendulum <sup>says</sup> the way men go and leave you full of child
- long strong wrong every belong long
- Yours is the face I recognize
- With I touch some face I recognize
- Child the current of your breath is six days long
- drink my answers in
- bone of my bone
- You sense the way we belong but this is an institution
- Your lips are animal <sup>head</sup> they will not know me very long they are red with love.

Your essay should be at least 350 words long. The quality of your analysis is more important than the length of your essay.

Your essay should include:

- an **introduction** that states the focus of your essay
- **key points** related to the question, supported by examples and quotations
- a **conclusion** that focuses on your argument.

Support the points you make with **specific details** from the text(s).

Begin your written text(s) essay here:

Societal views can be detrimental due to the pressure people feel to conform. The thought provoking poem 'Unknown Girl in the Maternity Ward' written by Anne Sexton critiques the power influence society has on the way we live our lives. Sexton provides a commentary on the stigma surrounding unwed motherhood, leading to the tragic separation of an unwed mother and her newborn baby. The negative attitudes of the unknown girl and of the doctors and nurses working at the institution are established through imagery, structure and tone.

The contrasting attitudes the unknown girl feels towards the <sup>hostile</sup> institution and towards her baby is revealed through natural imagery. Sexton uses natural imagery of bone 'bone of my bone' to demonstrate the close bond between mother and baby. This influences me to associate their

relationship to nature. A ~~very~~ <sup>strong</sup> belonging and nurturing connection. This connection to nature is further demonstrated when Sexton uses the simile 'I touch your cheeks like flowers'. Flowers with connotations of soft innocence causes me to view their connection as natural and loving. However, these displays of simple love are made tragic by the setting of the clinical institution. The natural imagery is starkly contrasted by 'the nurses nod their caps you are shepherded down starch halls'. This <sup>\*</sup> reveals the institution as cold and hostile. The doctors and nurses remain faceless and detached. <sup>\*</sup> Concerned solely in factual information rather than emotional detail. The attitudes of the doctors ~~is~~ revealed through their behaviour. The doctors treat the unknown girl with disdain 'the doctors return to scold me'. This enforces the key theme of the stigma surrounding unmarried motherhood. The doctors believe it is unacceptable for the unknown girl to keep her baby as she is unwed. This is emphasised by 'the noble they ask of me'. The doctors ask only for the name of the father, not the mother. This establishes the attitude ~~that~~ that men were considered the dominant sex. Because the

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\*2. This contrasts the unknown girl's relationship with her baby which is very passionate.

unknown girl is unmarried she is incapable of caring for her baby.<sup>\*2</sup> In testimony to this. 'The Girls Who Went Away' written by Anne Shrepper, published in 1963 and therefore circulating during the time this poem was written in the early 1960s. Is the devastating case study of the blame, guilt, shame and isolation experienced by unwed women with children. Similar to the poem men are seen as 'pendulum souls going the way men go / and leave you full of child'. The woman is shamed and silenced. The unknown girl remains unnamed giving the poem universality as this could be any woman. The comparison ~~and contrast~~ of the unknown girl's attitude towards her child established through natural imagery is loving and nurturing. Contrasted by her resentful attitude towards the hostile institution and doctors who treat her with contempt.

\*3. As a result of this the unknown girl feels frustrated and upset as she is forced to abandon her beloved baby.

The poem has five, eleven line stanzas which are structured by an abab rhyme scheme. This strict stanza structure reinforced by repetition of words illustrates the constrictions placed on the unknown girl due to societal expectations. Sexton wrote the poem following an abab rhyme scheme. This means that for every four sentences the first and third line will rhyme with each other and the second and fourth lines will rhyme with each other. For example, in the first stanza the last word of every second sentence 'long, strong, wrong, throng, belong and long'. Each stanza is written following a parallel structure.

The first line and final line repeats itself. For example, the third stanza begins with 'You is the face I recognize and finishes with 'Will I touch some face I recognize'. This crucial change signifies the imminent separation and isolation the unknown girl will experience when she leaves her child. Every word choice is dictated by an imposed structure similarly the unknown girl's freedom is restricted by doctors at the institution upholding societal mores. The rigid stanza structure

reveals the negative attitude of the unknown girl who feels constrained by societal ideals. As it is deemed unacceptable for her to keep her baby by side

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The first, third and fifth stanzas describe the physical interdependency of the mother and baby. This is revealed through the unknown girl's conversational tone. Allowing the reader insight in to the attitude of the unknown girl. The unknown girl addresses her child directly and informally 'Child the current of your breath is six days long'. This direct address demonstrates how the unknown girl feels ~~rela~~ a connection to her baby. There are no pretenses in this relationship. The unknown girl feels valued by the baby 'You drink my answers in'. The baby senses their natural connection. Resulting in the unknown girl being able to establish a close bond with her baby. However the anxiety the unknown girl experiences is apparent. 'You sense ~~that~~ way we belong but this is an institution bed. You will not know me very long'. The unknown girl's tone signifies the tension she experiences knowing their relationship is only temporary. The tone of this poem reveals the unknown girl's

M6

Extra space if required.

Write the question number(s) if applicable.

QUESTION  
NUMBER

having connection with her baby 'Your lips are animal they are fed with love' she describes their close bond with emotion and detail. However ~~she~~ the tone allows the reader insight in to the anxiety and tension the unknown girl is experiencing.

In conclusion, the attitude of the unknown girl and of the nurses and doctors at the institution is revealed through imagery, structure and tone. Contrasting natural imagery of the baby with the institution emphasises the contrasting attitudes the unknown girl feels towards her beloved baby and the clinical institution. The rigid stanza structure highlights how the unknown girl is constrained by the attitude and ideals of 1950s to 1960s society which she feels pressured to conform to. Lastly, the tone enables the reader insight into the attitude of the unknown girl as she <sup>bravely</sup> faces the imminent separation of her and the baby. The social stigma surrounding unwed motherhood during the

Extra space if required.

Write the question number(s) if applicable.

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QUESTION  
NUMBER

time. ~~Unknown Girl in the Maternity Ward~~  
was written results in the poem raising  
questions and causing the reader to  
react emotionally to this powerful poem.



<b>Grade</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Text Title</b>	<b>Comment</b>
5	5	Of course ...black women	Some convincing understanding shown. Identifies the use of pronoun, symbol, diction, and triple construction and explains significance of these to the ideas. More implicit on “shape your reaction”.
6	2	Unknown girl in the maternity ward.	Good on “attitudes of characters in the poem”. Links between features and attitudes are not always clear; candidate does not show insightful understanding.