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TOP SCHOLAR



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Scholarship 2010 English

9.30 am Tuesday 16 November 2010

Time allowed: Three hours

Total marks: 24

ANSWER BOOKLET

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

Use this booklet to write THREE essays, ONE from each section in Question Booklet 93001Q.

Begin each essay on a NEW page. Number each essay carefully. Each essay is worth 8 marks.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–22 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.

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Shakespeare's "skill in human nature" may have been first addressed hundreds of years ago by Samuel Johnson. However human nature in itself has not changed significantly in that time; rather our society and language has changed around us. Thus Shakespeare's messages and character that were believed in his own time are not so far removed from the people sitting in a modern audience of Othello, King Lear or Hamlet. While many are discouraged from enjoying Shakespeare's plays due to the less accessible language and situations that appear outdated, it is important to look beyond these to the wisdom that can be imparted on us in the 21st century.

To call Shakespeare's language "obscure" is to display a lack of understanding of his genius. Undeniably the use of very archaic language is to be found in his work. This is reflective of the Elizabethan era and a constant reminder that Shakespeare wrote with an expectation of a specific audience - not the audience he is confronted with today. Nevertheless his crafting of the English language and the diction he gives to his characters deserves much appreciation. The tragedy Othello may seem to some, as something irrelevant today as we would never speak of things in

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terms of "thus or thus" as opposed to "this or that". Upon inspection, it is important to recognise that Shakespeare's impact on his society is comparable to the impact literature today has on us. Othello's villain and antagonist Iago is and always has been a shocking figure in terms of his uncensored diction. His use of imagery incites "sexual disgust" in the 21st century as it did in the 18th century, as ~~as was known from~~ believed by critic Graeme Anderson. Iago describes sexual activity as "making the beast with two backs" and his view on women is that they "go to bed to work." The idea of ~~the~~ valuing sex over love is something as controversial today as it would have been then. With the rappers that we find on ~~radio~~ the radio and music television there are similar attitudes towards sex, and women only being viewed as sexual objects. Thus a ~~character~~ character such as Iago is capable of creating a response in ~~any~~ a modern or Elizabethan audience due to his crude language. If somebody ~~acted~~ in today's world compared sex to the animalistic behaviour with a simile such as "prime as goats, hot as monkeys" or the metaphor of a "black ram" "dipping" "a white ewe" there would be similar shock and disgust as there often is with the uncensored language we find in popular

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culture.

Moreover, some of Shakespeare's language ~~is still used~~ would not even appear out of place in modern literature. In Othello's descent into insanity and paranoia, he cries "Why did I marry?" The use of monosyllabic words and simple sentence structure set this phrase up to stand the test of time. It is not so unusual nowadays for a marriage that is breaking up to influence a man to say such things. Similarly, his wife Desdemona responds later with "O, These men, these men!" Not only ~~can~~ ^{do} compare the are we familiar with the idea of one cursing an entire gender^{after a break-up} but again her use of language is far from obscure. The repetition of "These men" fills home with ideas about the male and female viewpoints in literature. It ~~and~~ is ~~a~~ of interest to feminist critics in the context of today's society ~~as~~ as "human nature" has not ~~existed~~ in fact, ~~it~~ swayed much from what it once was. We can thus see ourselves in these characters, in their views on relationships and even in the language they use to describe it.

Furthermore, Aristotle's concept of the "tragic flaw" in Shakespearean tragedy is unbeniably something that is present in all of us.

Othello's jealousy, King Lear's ~~blind~~ metaphorical

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blindness, Hamlet's indecision and Macbeth's ambition - we have all seen these qualities in otherwise "good" people as such. How then, can we call our tragic heroes "outdated"? Othello and Hamlet in particular can emotionally affect the audience and cause us to feel sympathetic. These two men do not seem so much at fault in their downfall; instead we feel sorry for Hamlet as he is so lost - as clear in the famous parallel structure "to be or not to be" - and Othello as it is essentially Iago's "motiveless malignity" (Coleridge) that causes his downfall. Shakespeare shows us the consequences of the element of evil in all of us. This is as important in today's world as it was in the 1600s.

Particularly, women in Shakespeare bear similarities to real women that we know today. Shakespeare is thought to have been the first contemporary writer to give women personalities instead of disregarding them. While our society is ~~very~~ considerably less misogynistic than Shakespeare's, ~~most~~ his female characters' reactions to situations are attributable to those in the modern day. They often have attitudes of being strong-willed and outspoken instead of their expectations of being submissive to their husbands ~~especially~~ in tragedies as well as comedies.

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Bertrice from Much Ado About Nothing and
 Katherina from Taming of the Shrew prove to
~~be~~ be as independent and ~~rebel~~ as Emilia
 from Othello. Emilia's views on marriage and
 men are ~~not~~ likely to have been ~~so~~
 influenced by being married to her "wayward
 husband", the ~~wicked~~ "damnd, lago", yet she is
 impressively a feminist before her time. Emilia's
 lyrical and eloquent language is often abrupt
 and ~~invariably~~ uncensored, but demonstrates
 her perception of the inequality between men and
 women in her society - something that
 Shakespeare must have been aware of. Emilia
 boldly tells Desdemona, "They are all but stomachs
 and we all but food. They eat us hungry, and
 when they are full, they belch us." She also has
 the view that "it is their husbands' faults
 if wives do fall." Women in the modern day
 can relate to Emilia's fury at "My husband!"
 and refusal to "charm her tongue" as they understand
 that women have independent thoughts! Emilia's
 frustration with her treatment is understandable
 and ~~so~~ enters the heart of any modern woman
 who feels undervalued. ~~As~~ Emilia is not
 the only one either - Desdemona is often
 Ophelia in Hamlet is also ridiculed by men
 and Hamlet even claims, "Foully, thy
 name is Woman."

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It would demonstrate a lack of understanding of the complex ideas and ~~and~~ of Shakespeare to claim that his chosen situations are "improbable" in the present day. Of course, people today do not often deal with ~~relat~~ problems by murdering their wives or poisoning people, however the main themes of jealousy, revenge and the consequences of action or inaction are relevant today. In Othello, a man insecure about his physical appearance believes that his wife prefers a man who is not "black" or "declin'd into the vale of years" but has attributes that the " Moor is defective in". This is not so unbelievable. In Hamlet, a young man finds himself overcome by confusion, rage and insanity over the death of his father. In King Lear, a man "goes around with no eyes", unable to see beyond his own need for flattery. In Macbeth, a ~~long~~ all man allows his desire to be great and ambition to come before anything else. These universal ideas are not reflective of improbable situations - rather, of the "magic powers" and frailties that exist within all of us and produce the same heart-breaking consequences, again and again. We need Shakespeare in our society to continually remind us of the how our flaws could ruin us and everyone around.

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us, if not in the ~~situation~~ extremity of tragic death and despair.

thus I conclude that Shakespeare's work is as relevant today as it was when written and originally performed. It is for this reason that his characters, ~~use~~ of their diction and the situations they find themselves in are still recognizable today. T.S. Eliot once said that Othello is a "fearful exposure of human weakness." Human weakness, indeed, never changes //

Literature raises issues and concerns that exist in a variety of contexts. Regardless of the social ~~aspects~~ background to writing, it is interesting that the elements of gender ~~and race~~ and race are often connected strongly to power and powerlessness. Through both feminist literature and New Zealand literature one can draw comparisons between those different aspects of social context that exist within and ^{beyond} ~~within~~ the world of a text.

Literature that deals with a woman's search for ~~independence~~ independence in a world that thwarts her from doing so, exemplifies the ongoing struggle that women have for power. Over time writers have offered us the optimistic possibility that women can overcome the constraints of their society and thus their feelings of powerlessness. The significance of gender in ~~Victorian~~ Victorian and pre-Victorian literature written by women is significant. The Brontë sisters had to write under pseudonyms as ~~an something~~ they were not even offered the choice of being writers in a misogynistic society. In Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre we ~~experience~~ experience Jane's progression through ~~the~~ discrimination but discovery at the end that she does have the power to assert her independence. She "burns

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"With degradation" when Mr Rochester tries to assert power over her and in the end sees that it is equality of power in a relationship that "knit us so very close". The theme of the search for oneself is something that goes hand in hand with female protagonists ~~trying~~ searching for power and control over their lives. In Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, main character ~~is~~ and voice of reason Elizabeth Bennet shows her ability to control her own life when she refuses to marry Mr Collins. As a result, both Elizabeth and Jane do find true love ~~at the~~ in the end. ~~to~~ readers this suggests that powerless can be overcome.

Over time, female writers have continued to assert their beliefs that women should not give into the expectations that men may have of them or be submissive. In the 1960s Margaret Atwood wrote The Edible Woman as "a product of the society" she herself was surrounded by. Atwood wrote about a woman the same age as herself at the time and her struggle to decide the way she wanted to live. Even in the 1960s women were not given the power that men were, and the change in narrative point of view when heroine Marian gets engaged is significant. It changes up from her as it goes from first to third person. Perhaps more significant is that



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she seems more distant from herself and her own emotions. Marian feels she loses power over herself when she has a man to "look after" her. Just like Jane who begins to "mechanically obey" Mr Rochester after their engagement, Marian submissively tells Peter, "I'd rather leave the bigger decisions up to you." The rejection of "one sexual role after another" of Marian is compared with the allegory of Alice in Wonderland who refused maternity as well as homosexuality. Like Alice, Marian is struggling to feel any sense of power due to her role as a woman. A woman's lack of power is something particularly of interest to Atwood. Her acclaimed novel The Handmaid's Tale was more than a typical dystopian novel of its time like Huxley's Brave New World and Orwell's 1984. It was ^{also} an exploration of the relationship between gender and power, and a woman's need to fight for any sense of independence.

The idea of power in literature is also explored in New Zealand literature. In contrast to feminist literature, Frank Sargeson's short story A Piece of Yellow Soap communicates a man's loss of power to a woman. The narrator in this man's life ~~loses all~~ "loses all power to look the woman in the face" when

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she holds the piece of yellow soap. In fact, the soap is used as a symbol of power, and this male-female role reversal is significant. It is present due to a further variable to ~~gender~~^{personal} and power - that is one's ~~situation~~ situation. The narrator ~~is~~ ^{now} feels guilty and this causes him to lose his power. Thus the stereotypical powerless woman is not always the case.

✓ New Zealand literature also conveys the theme of powerlessness in terms of race. ~~as well as~~ Apirana Taylor in his poetry explores the lack of power of the Maori people ~~in~~ in New Zealand's history. In Footprints in Tears and Parihaka he demonstrates an outlook less optimistic than that visible in feminist literature. Being based on true events, it is slightly upsetting that we are offered no solution to the ~~esp~~ figurative "lifted up by the roots like bees from our land". Similarly in Witi Ihimaera's Dinner with A Cannibal the narrator shows his regret about the events of Parihaka as he "should have known, at dinner." Post colonial critics argue that ~~despite~~ it is the powerlessness of the Maori 'race' that is ~~esp~~ the focus of Maori poetry.

Yet powerlessness extends beyond race and gender. Another New Zealand writer Katherine

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Mansfield is interested in the powerlessness that comes with being a child. In The Dolls House and The Garden Party children in their innocence have more moral views ~~as~~ than their parents due to social stratification. Protagonist Kezia in The Dolls House represents an appreciation for those often given less limelight ~~as~~ - the little light ~~is~~ lamp in The Dolls House ~~is~~ a symbol for the ~~children~~ poorer children who they are not allowed to interact with. In The Garden Party Laura ~~as~~ "doesn't understand" the ideals of her mother who regards her own ~~success~~ success and reputation as more important than consideration of those not so well-off. The theory of Marxism can be attributed to the idea that children have less power to assert their beliefs than their ~~parents~~ parents do, particularly in a class-bound society. It is often forgotten that New Zealand like England, had an element of class division in its past.

A text's social context has an influence on the ideas and issues chosen by a writer to be communicated. Thus the ~~as~~ concerns of gender, race and class are ~~involved~~ often entwined into the portrayal of power and powerlessness. ~~Literature~~ Writers

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focus on these ~~issues~~ ideas ~~what happens~~ and
~~then~~ in doing this, hint at the ~~sort of~~ ~~society~~ of
~~the~~ type of society of which they are writing.

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The excerpt from Negronis with Alan seems to be an acknowledgement of the inspiration ^{Graham Swift} received from Alan Ross, whereas the poem Outcast ~~is~~ tells a less concrete story of ~~some~~ the life changing impact that somebody's words once had on ^{Selina Tusitala Marsh} Both Text A and Text B deal with the impact one person has had on the writer or narrators life. Nevertheless ~~though~~ the prose focuses ~~more~~ on a single aspect of ~~another~~ one's life which is a contrast to the poem, which demonstrates ~~the~~ ~~in~~ the way one has entirely changed the way she lives her life based on a relationship.

The difference in the amount of information we are given ~~about~~ in each text is typical of the genres of prose and poetry. In Text A we know that Graham Swift has been inspired by Alan Ross; we know that Ross once took him out for a drink which influenced him to keep writing. Conversely, in Outcast we can only assume that "Audre" ~~who~~ to whom the poem is dedicated to, was responsible for encouraging Selina Tusitala Marsh to live less by the rules and allow herself some freedom. ~~Both~~ Both texts, however, have a thankful tone of appreciation as their relationships with these people have changed ~~them~~ ~~their~~ their attitudes. Negronis with Alan gives us specific detail, ~~about~~ ~~the~~ words alluding

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to "London Magazine" and the drink "Negroni." This builds on the idea that it was a specific event that ~~that~~ raised Swift's spirits in terms of writing, yet we still assume that his relationship with Alan Ross ~~is~~ was sustained, as he refers to him informally as "Alan". On the other hand, Marsh suggests that it was more than a specific ~~moment~~ moment that encouraged her to live more like a "rebel". She remembers Andre's words word for word,^{as if Andre only said them once} yet suggests that Andre knew her very well. What Andre tells her fits to well with the kind of cautious person that she is, a "darling by nature".^{For them to have only shared the conversation} Also, the title "Outcast" is a much broader idea than "Negronis with Alan".

A further comparison of the texts suggests that Negronis with Alan was written with the purpose of encouraging young writers like who he used to be, whereas Marsh's poem is more personal. Swift begins in second person, using the pronoun "you" to relate the way he used to feel to the way that other new writers may feel. The ~~his~~ voice is conversational and the style is accessible. It feels as though Swift is having a personal conversation with his readers, sharing that ~~even~~ he also couldn't "stand (his) own company" and uses hyperbole such as the "feeling of being buried alive" to make his audience feel personally connected to

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the ~~experience~~ writing experience he describes. He also presents a challenge to his readers ~~to~~ with the imperative "don't be a writer" if they can't stand what he endured. It is possible that Swift is trying to be to young writers what Ross was to him. Comparatively, Marsh's poem does not suggest anything in particular to her audience. It is written "for Andre"; not for anyone else. She, too, uses the second person narrative point of view to direct her poem to "you", yet the "you" she refers to is assumed to be Andre, not the audience as it is in Negroni's *With Alan*. Marsh repeats the phrase "but you said" to emphasise to Andre the way that she remembered his words and the way that they influenced her. She wants Andre to know the metaphorical way she thinks about his attitude - that it has "become a map", something that she uses to help her navigate through her life. She does not mention that she may wish to impart this wisdom onto her readers.

Structurally, Swift connects his beginning and ending in order to ~~to~~ keep the attention ~~of~~ of his readers and their feelings of personal involvement. Yet Marsh ~~uses~~ connects the beginning and ending of her piece so as to demonstrate her development as a person as a

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result of her relationship with Andre. After the first paragraph of Swift's Negronis with Alan he switches to first person so as to tell his story. The connection back to his audience ends in his last paragraph where he implies that young people can do what he can. The parallel structure in "young enough and wise enough" is rather paradoxical as the cliché saying is to be "older and wiser". Thus Swift is intentionally avoiding patronising his audience by saying that young people are capable of being successful writers. It is clear that Swift is doing more than retelling an inspirational experience of his own; he is imparting inspiration on his readers. The contrastingly personal ~~and writer~~ focus of Outcast is also clear in its structure. The poem appears to be written in free verse, which highlights the fact that Marsh is writing it for herself and not for any structural expectations of her readers. Additionally, ~~and the~~ her main focus of her own growth as a person is clear in the connection between the poem's opening and its closure. It can be understood that the narrator moves from the confines of the line of the "margins" to ~~now~~ be finding herself "beyond the line". ~~Now~~

The Impact of each relationship

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We can ~~see~~ also see similarities in the ~~displays~~ ~~and their responses in~~ ideas of each piece. There is no question that each writer has been greatly moved by their relationships. Yet in ~~major differences their~~ ~~Swift's relationship~~ resulted in ~~an attitude that both cases, the~~ relationship seems to have encouraged the writer to make the most of every opportunity. In the second to last paragraph of Negroni with Alan, Swift describes the way in which Alan Ross changed his view on writing. The long, complex sentence "Life offers... release" is structured in this way so as to better communicate his idea. The idea of ~~the~~ a long and tedious journey is established as this sentence is, perhaps, long and tedious. The fact that it ends with a "release" shows how his Negroni with Alan that day was in fact a release; a release from the struggle of not knowing whether he could last as a writer. The final sentence of the piece is impactive - it is constructed as a warning to other potential writers "not to waste the opportunity of walking on air". The cliché "walking on air" has connotations of joy and freedom, both of which link to the ~~the~~ ~~main~~ idea of freedom in Dunkirk. Even if we are unsure initially about what is meant by "he nobodys darling... to keep you warm", Marsh ~~half way~~ through ~~which~~ spells it out for us as "freedom", your

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shawl". The metaphor of freedom as a shawl to "keep you warm" and "warm (your) flesh" suggests that freedom, as now discovered by Marsh, is actually a form of protection and does lead to a more fulfilling life. With this shawl Marsh no longer wastes opportunities and sees freedom in everything - a "grey beach cottage", a "hand under the table", a "green dress." She links this idea with the imagery of New Zealand scenery - "Huka curls", "paura spirals", "slim promise of sun" and "the reef" which adds to the idea of freedom. Outdoor landscapes and nature have connotations of freedom. We see that perhaps Marsh has indeed become an "Outcast", being "cast out" or having freedom "cast about me". To readers we get the sense that she, like Swift, no longer lets opportunities pass her by. Her attitude on life has been changed as a result of the advice to be "nobody's darling".

Furthermore, both writers consider that their experiences are not unique. Thus, a range of similarities and differences can be drawn between Graham Swift's Negro's with Alan and Selina Tustiela Marsh's Outcast in terms of their descriptions. The former is more focused on a specific part of one's life that has developed as a result of a relationship and the latter

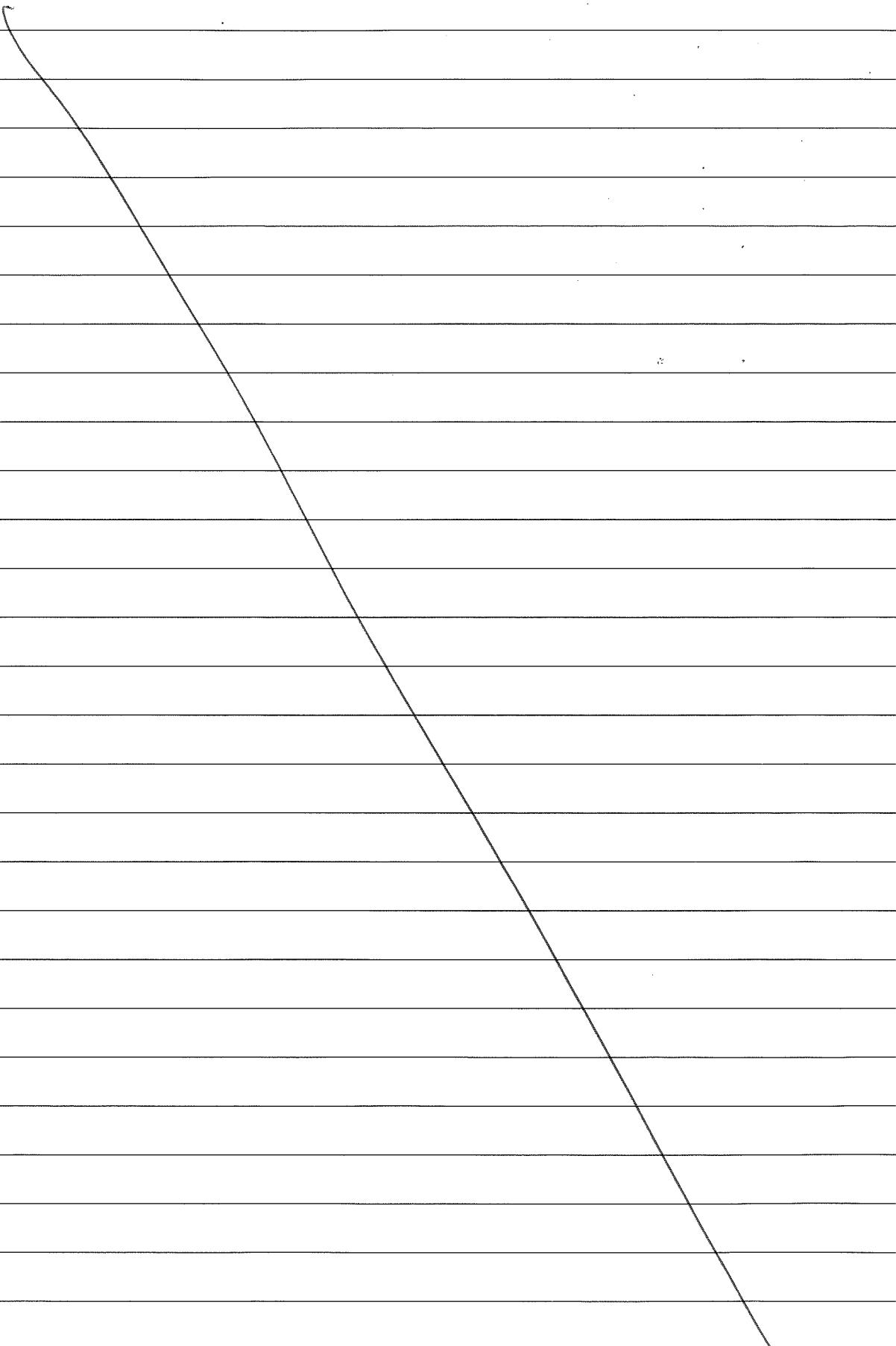
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is more interested in the way one's life can change completely as a result of a relationship. The prose is ~~more~~ directed at an audience of to-be-writers whereas the poem is dedicated to the person of whom it is written. Both ~~songs~~ pieces are crafted in a manner that allow their writers to discuss the theme of ~~freedom~~ a change in attitude.

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