

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

International General Certificate of Secondary Education

MARK SCHEME for the June 2005 question paper

0488 LITERATURE (SPANISH)

0488/01

Paper 1, maximum mark 60

These mark schemes are published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. They show the basis on which Examiners were initially instructed to award marks. They do not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began. Any substantial changes to the mark scheme that arose from these discussions will be recorded in the published *Report on the Examination*.

All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes must be read in conjunction with the question papers and the *Report on the Examination*.

- CIE will not enter into discussion or correspondence in connection with these mark schemes.

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Grade thresholds for Syllabus 0488 (Literature (Spanish)) in the June 2005 examination.

| | maximum mark available | minimum mark required for grade: | | | |
|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|----|----|----|
| | | A | C | E | F |
| Component 1 | 60 | 50 | 35 | 18 | 12 |

The threshold (minimum mark) for D is set halfway between those for Grades C and E.

The threshold (minimum mark) for G is set as many marks below the F threshold as the E threshold is above it.

Grade A* does not exist at the level of an individual component.

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Answers will be marked according to the following general criteria:

- 18-20 Detailed, well-written, well-organised answer, completely relevant to question and shows sensitive personal response to book. For passage-based questions, detailed attention to words of passage.
- 15-17 Detailed answer, relevant to question and with personal response; may be a bit cut-and-dried. For p-b questions, close attention to words but may be a few omissions/superficialities.
- 12-14 Competent answer, relevant but limited; signs of personal response, good knowledge of book. For p-b, some attention to words but some significant omissions and/or misunderstandings.
- 9-11 Answer relevant to question but may show some misunderstanding and/or limitations; effort to communicate personal response and knowledge. P-b: significant omissions/misunderstandings, but some response comes over.
- 6-8 Attempt to answer question and some knowledge of book; limited, scrappy answer; clumsy expression. P-b: attempt to respond, but with severe limitations.
- 4-5 Short, scrappy answer; confused; signs that book has been read. P-b: has read the passage and conveyed one or two basic ideas about it.
- 2-3 Has read book and absorbed some very elementary ideas about it. P-b: may have glanced at passage and written a few words.
- 0-1 Nothing to reward. Obvious non-reading of book, or total non-appreciation.

It is very helpful if examiners comment on the scripts. This does not mean writing long essays, but simply ticking good points, noting a few observations in the margin (e.g. 'good point', 'irrelevant', 'excessive quotation', etc.). A brief comment at the end of an essay (e.g. 'rambling answer, shows some knowledge but misses point of question') is particularly helpful. If your team leader disagrees with the mark, s/he will find it helpful to have some idea of what was in your mind! **DON'T** forget to write your mark for each essay at the end of that essay, and to transfer all three marks to the front of the script, and total them.

Beware of rubric infringements: usually failure to cover three books, or **NO STARRED QUESTION** (easily missed). An answer that infringes the rubric scores **one-fifth** of the mark it would otherwise gain. **THIS PENALTY IS APPLIED NOT TO THE LOWEST-SCORING ANSWER ON THE PAPER, BUT TO THE ANSWER THAT IS INFRINGING THE RUBRIC.**

E.g.:

- (1) candidate answers a starred question on Cabal and scores 12; an essay question on Cabal and scores 15; an essay question on Rulfo and scores 12. The Rulfo question must stand, and so must the Cabal starred question, because candidates are **required** to answer a starred question. Therefore the essay question on Cabal is the one that must be penalised.
- (2) candidate answers two essay questions on Cabal, scoring 13 and 14, and a starred question on Rulfo, scoring 10. The Rulfo answer must stand, because it is the required starred question. But **either** of the two Cabal questions could be reckoned as the offender, and so it is right here to penalise the lower-scoring of the two essays.
- (3) candidate answers three essay questions, on Cabal, Rulfo and Mistral, but no starred question. Here you simply penalise the lowest-scoring of the three answers.
- (4) candidate answers three essay questions *and* covers only two books. In theory, candidate has therefore incurred a double rubric infringement, but normally we would penalise only one answer. This is a rare occurrence; if you come across it, and feel uneasy about how to treat it, please contact principal examiner.
- (5) candidate answers only two questions, on two different books, but not including a starred question. **THIS IS NOT A RUBRIC INFRINGEMENT.** We assume that the missing third question would have fulfilled the rubric. Both answers score their full mark

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Lazarillo

- 1 Imaginative questions based on a passage are not unprecedented; the two criteria for a good answer are convincing assumption of the appropriate voice and *detailed*, appropriate response to the passage. (Among the better candidates, the amount of detail may well be the main differentiator.) Lazarillo's voice should be extremely familiar to candidates: the old-fashioned syntax need not be imitated (though extra credit may be given for a successful imitation), but the attitude should be right. We know that Lazarillo is well disposed to the Escudero, while despising his pretentiousness and despairing of his poverty; the passage should call forth all three responses. The Escudero begins by conjuring up a vision of a fantasy world of wealth, which he obviously believes in with one half of his mind, and then immediately demolishes it, showing that the other half of his mind is aware of the reality. Lazarillo will be well aware that this is happening, and will think, obviously, that it's no use having all this real estate if it is too ruinous to be exploited. The Escudero is not so proud that he won't seek employment, but he finds excuses for not accepting any that might be (though doubtless hasn't been!) offered. Lazarillo will agree with his assessments of churchmen, caballeros etc., but will think that *any* employment with anyone is worth accepting if they will feed you – so the Escudero at least ought to try it. Even a reward of old clothes would be better than nothing! As for the imaginary portrayal of how (disgracefully) the Escudero would behave if he were employed, Lazarillo is unlikely to be shocked by it, indeed would consider it a highly suitable way to behave if you can get away with it – but it is only another castle in the air, as the final words of the speech reveal. Lázaro's comment at the end punctures the balloon by setting the whole speech down as a combination of self-pity (the Escudero's present misery isn't his own fault, it's just bad luck) and vanity: a good candidate may be able to read this back into his reaction to the speech.
- 2 This is quite a tricky question, given the always satirical, blackly humorous and frequently ironical tone of the work. A range of responses is possible, and I do not think one can dictate a list of 'good' and 'bad' qualities which can be deduced unequivocally from the book. That being said, it is easier to detect what the author does not approve of than what he does: there is no unequivocally 'good' character in the book. The most detestable character is surely the Clérigo, whose leading characteristic is meanness. The empty posturing of the Escudero is treated much more sympathetically, but it would be hard to argue that the author invites admiration for him. The Ciego is more problematic: he is cunning, hypocritical and cruel, but these qualities are not unequivocally denounced and while Lázaro does not like the blind man, and is most ready to retaliate for the latter's cruelties, he also admires his cleverness and learns a lot from it. As for Lázaro himself, as the original *pícaro* he has none of the most obvious Christian and/or social virtues, but the author strongly suggests that this is the fault of nurture rather than nature: he is not a villain, but he is a survivor in a harsh world, and that does not make for conventional niceness. Quickness of wit seems to be his most 'admirable' quality. The author clearly does not think much of the morality of contemporary society and consistently refuses to condemn, if he does not openly admire, those who defy it. Good answers here will be marked by a wide range of reference and by well-supported comment; weaker ones are likely to cover only a few characters and/or a few episodes.
- 3 Most, if not all, of the really famous scenes in the book relate to Lázaro's cunning in his perpetual search for food, so even the weakest candidates should have no problem in choosing a suitable episode. The discriminator will, of course, be the degree of detailed attention to language, and the extent to which the candidate conveys amusement. Mere paraphrase and narrative will not score highly.

Borges

- 4 (a) The story, though so short, is rich, so different readers may be interested in different aspects of it and I would not be too prescriptive, so long as there is a genuine attempt to grapple with the text. It begins in something approximating to the time-honoured 'Once upon a time...', and that time is intriguingly far off and long ago (for an English reader – or rector – anyway). It has the irresistible attraction of royalty, and the irresistible – and typically Borgesian – subject matter of the labyrinth. It has a spice of fairytale danger ('los que entran se perdían'). Despite its economy of style, it is not bare narrative, but includes some stimulating notions. The fact that the Arab is apparently saved by the power of prayer, for example, is mysterious and suggestive. His cryptic reaction is intriguing, and his final revenge – again note the extreme economy of the narration – gives the story a neat twist. Finally, the idea that an empty desert is a more effective labyrinth than the most elaborate man-made one is highly intriguing and leaves the reader/hearers (ourselves and the metafictional congregation)

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with something meaty to chew over. Not all the above is needed for high marks: intelligent use of well-chosen references/quotations will provide access to those.

(b) Borges gives us the hint: 'la historia de un rey a quien la Divinidad había castigado por haber erigido un laberinto'. He apparently agrees with the sentiment in the (short) story that any such activity is presumptuous, and so Abenjacán is tempting God by erecting another labyrinth on their doorstep. This alone may be offered by weaker candidates, and may show a low (9-14 marks) level of understanding (the overall mark will of course be affected by part (a)). Digging a little deeper, we can suggest that he chooses this particular story because it, like the labyrinth, is of Moslem origin ('entre los moros se usarán tales casas, pero no entre cristianos'). This takes understanding a notch higher. For a good mark (17-20) I would hope for candidates to notice the extreme oddness of a good Christian vicar, in a distant and deeply conservative part of early twentieth-century England, coming out with this story, especially in view of the extremely limited outlook (and presumably intelligence) of his congregation, and in view of the fact that the story is Moslem, and therefore ought to be beyond the pale, like the labyrinth! Going even deeper, one might suggest that the vicar is a much more subtle and open-minded fellow than one originally thought, and is capable of enjoying, understanding, and even attempting to pass on the fascinating ideas contained in the story – see part (a). (After that one's reflections, like the story, are likely to become labyrinthine, and I would not expect even an A candidate to go any further.)

- 5 Few candidates are likely to find the prospect offered by the story anything other than repellent. Even fairly weak candidates (9/10 marks?) ought to be able to cite some of the more obvious horrors of immortality as here portrayed: the miserable condition in which the 'immortals' live; the horrible degradation of 'Homer', the father of literature, robbed even of speech; the sterile wonderings of the Immortal; and above all the fact that his, and all the Immortals', dearest wish is to rediscover death. If this is clearly stated and well supported it should merit a mark of 12-14 or perhaps 15/16. For higher reward I would hope for some of the subtleties: for instance, the very Borgesian notion that immortality is a kind of labyrinth: you are constantly coming back to the same place, there is (to quote Shakespeare) 'nothing left remarkable'. More striking still, the degradation of the immortal community, and their loss or renunciation of the defining human characteristic of speech, tells us that it is mortality that makes us fully human. The fact that the Immortal has achieved nothing worthwhile in all his centuries of life adds weight to this idea. Finally (as I see it – be open, of course, to ideas not suggested here), the strange twist at the end, whereby the Immortal assumes or assimilates Homer's identity and records his immortality in an edition of his own works gives a fascinating new slant on the very old idea that great literature is 'immortal' in quite a different sense – and what author is more immortal, in that much more satisfactory sense, than Homer?

One feature of answers on Borges is that the quality of the candidates' understanding depends to a considerable extent on that of their teacher. A batch of scripts from a single centre may reflect a very clear understanding on the part of the teacher, and if the teacher has conveyed this to the students, of course they must all be rewarded accordingly, however much the same ideas may recur. In such cases differentiation will be based on the apparent soundness of the candidates' own understanding and the degree to which they support it with evidence. Very weak answers, which talk more about the candidate's own views on immortality than about the text, will of course receive very little reward.

- 6 As always in this kind of question, the first step towards success is an apt choice of passage, or rather, here, story; the second is a lucid understanding of the selected story; the third is relevance to the question; the fourth is detailed reference to the writing to show how Borges makes the subject fascinating. Weak candidates are likely to do no more than re-tell the story; given Borges's typically cryptic narrative style, some credit (up to 11?) may be given for this if the answer shows a clear understanding of the criminal character and/or event.

Esquivel

- 7 Only the very weakest candidates will be unable to pick out from this passage details that show the monstrous tyranny of Mamá Elena. Apart from that, discrimination will be from the number and variety of *precise* details selected, and the quantity and quality of *precise* comments on the language. For example: the use of *ceremonia* and *ritual* implies that Mamá Elena is treated almost as a goddess. The detailed description of how the bathwater is prepared increases this impression and also conveys how hard Tita has to work. A little imaginative personal response will help here: anyone who has ever had to carry buckets of water will appreciate the burden that is laid on her. Skill and patience are also needed, as shown e.g. by the hair-combing routine. The assumption that Tita and no other has to do

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the work, and the fact that Mamá Elena never says thank you but always complains, strengthen the tyranny aspect. Good candidates may note that despite an appearance of objectivity, we in this scene from Tita's point of view – for her it is a 'calvario' – and this elicits a still stronger reaction.

- 8 This seems to me to be a key question in the novel; hopefully candidates will at least have considered it at some stage. Assuming that Tita can get free from Mamá Elena – as she does, though not completely, at the latter's death – she has three possible paths in life: to continue as the universal drudge; to go off with Pedro in some way; or to marry John. By every rational criterion the last alternative is by far the most promising: Tita *could* be happy with John, and any candidate who has read the book with any attention should be able to cite abundant evidence to that effect. Tita herself acknowledges it; but when it comes to the choice between a life of quiet but unexciting happiness with a man for whom she feels nothing stronger than grateful affection, and passion for Pedro, she simply cannot help but choose the passion, however undeserving – and ultimately fatal – its object. Objectively, one would have to argue that Tita makes the wrong choice; but the author does not pronounce nearly so clearly on the question, and candidates will of course be at liberty to make their own judgments – once they have examined the evidence. Opinions without evidence will not score highly. Hopefully the best candidates will realise that Esquivel's own judgment is not unequivocal.
- 9 Gertrudis, unlike her two sisters, has thoroughly broken away from the family tyranny, but she is aware of its force and in full sympathy with Tita's attempts to rebel. Therefore she will be delighted to find that the marriage has come about despite Rosaura's attempts to prevent it, and pleased to see Tita looking so happy. She will certainly remember the disastrous events at Rosaura's own wedding, and the liberation which it brought about for herself. The best answers will convey her forceful, uninhibited, coarse, but endearing personality.

Rulfo

- 10 It would take a very weak candidate not to feel the physical horror of the first part of this narrative. Even at this point, for high reward a candidate will need to do more than merely quote particular sentences and then simply affirm that they are 'horrible'. More perceptive analysis should show how Rulfo plays on deep, instinctive human fears and repulsions: decay, suffocation ('no había aire'), burial alive (Juan is said to be 'enterrado' but is plainly sentient). The horror of the second part (from 'me mataron los murmullos') is more subtle because it is mental: Juan Preciado finds himself entering a ghost world, where the warmth of life has departed, even his 'soul' is frozen, and he becomes one of the whispering horde – the lost souls – that cannot even pray for itself. Weak candidates will probably have little to say about this second part, and we may need to go up to 12 on the basis of a response to the first part which at least shows some appreciation of the author's use of language. Candidates who do justice to the entire passage will probably be in the 18-20 region.
- 11 As usual, we shall hope for more than a character sketch: for high reward candidates will have to show, with precise references, in what ways Miguel is and is not like Pedro Páramo. This should be made somewhat easier by the fact that the son is always presented in relation to the father. Both are bold, energetic, ruthless, self-absorbed, and rapacious pursuers of women. Miguel, however, seems to be significantly worse than his father in that he commits numerous actual crimes (for which Pedro has to bail him out), and seems to lack the ambition and determination which made Pedro Páramo into a successful, if brutal, cacique. Perceptive candidates may also note that Pedro Páramo made his own way in life, his family being a hindrance rather than a support, whereas Miguel had devoted support from Pedro Páramo and still got nowhere. On the other hand, Pedro Páramo's indulgence has obviously contributed greatly to making Miguel what he is. Given the difficulty of gathering evidence in this novel, a reasonable character sketch of Miguel, with some reference to Pedro Páramo, may score up to 14; detailed and appropriate references to the text will be worth 15 and above.
- 12 Judging from previous examinations, well-taught candidates have this matter well in hand: Comala, as Juan Preciado perceives it, is a realm of the dead. It has been identified with purgatory, limbo or hell, but it is probably best not to be too definite about this, since the theological implications are not a good fit. A convincing and detailed evocation of this 'ghost' Comala may score highly – certainly 15-17, perhaps even up to 18. However, a balanced answer would also need to take account of the 'real' Comala of the novel's second time frame, Pedro Páramo's lifetime: a place full of fear and oppression, but fundamentally normal and comprehensible. A candidate who can present both Comalas clearly will almost certainly be worth 18-20. A candidate who can show in detail how the two Comalas *interrelate* would be almost off the top of the IGCSE scale, I think; but given the quality of work on this novel so far we can at least hope for that level of achievement.

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Cabal

13 (a) The author plainly intends the audience's reaction to Kid to be mixed. On the one hand, he gives an impression of weakness and impotence: ironically, the champion strong man lacks the slightest emotional strength to withstand being jilted, and can only take his rage out on the punch bag (what else?). At the same time, his feelings for Anita are sincere and the news came as a great shock, so he will also attract some sympathy. Demonstrating this from the passage is easy, and no answer can be given much credit which does not cite from the passage in detail.

(b) Kid's grief hardly attains to tragic dignity, but it does gain in impact from the very superficial reaction of the others. Sony has no perception at all and is unable to offer any comfort; the inappropriateness of his interventions is frankly comical. Marcel is much more sympathetic; he sympathises with Kid on a shallow level, but cannot offer any real emotional comfort; his emotional vocabulary is confined to that of the boxing ring (a point which any capable candidate should be able to demonstrate). Mateos's reaction is typically self-centred: he is interested in Kid's state of mind only insofar as it affects his own plans ("y tenía que ser hoy..."). 12+ candidates should be able to convey most of this, with support; a more able candidate may be able to note that the Kid's emotional immaturity, graphically demonstrated here, and the inability of his associates to give him the emotional support he needs, are central themes of the play, which is what makes this passage so significant.

14 The writing seems to me to suggest very strongly that this is the case. Kid has been jilted, and since we never meet his girlfriend we cannot feel strongly about her; what we are told about her suggests that she will do him no good in any case. Marina is bound to Mateos, who has an appalling view of women and is clearly incapable of giving her anything except the notional respectability of being his lawful wife. Kid and Marina are the only two people in the play with any emotional depth: they belong to the same emotional sphere. At the same time, the fact that they both belong to the same circle – the boxing world – makes it easy for them to communicate. The fact that they use each other's real names is very significant. However, while the subtext of the play brings them together, the actual text keeps them apart: "estoy atada a Angel", says Marina. It is, indeed, *because* they are kept apart by Marina's devotion to Mateos that they can speak so freely to each other. Kid's generous action in ensuring that Mateos does marry Marina produces a satisfactory outcome in one sense, but audiences will surely be made to feel that it would have been better for Kid and Marina to get together. Candidates may not cover all of the above points, and they may of course judge the relationship in a different way. As usual, any arguments will be accepted which are well supported with detail. The long dialogue at the beginning of Act II is, of course, vital and no answer which does not consider that dialogue should be allowed to go above a mark of 11.

15 Kid's state of mind can be deduced from what he says not only in his first scene, but at various times throughout the play. No answer which has him in anything but a pessimistic mood is likely to be convincing. At this stage Kid still does not know that Anita is going to leave him, though he says he had his suspicions and those suspicions can be legitimately included by candidates. He will be feeling tired and yet restless, tense and anxious (he awakes with aches and pains). Though he has not seen the papers Sony and Marcel describe at the beginning of Act I, he certainly knows that he is not favoured to win the fight, and has severe doubts about it himself; indeed he wonders if he even wants to try. He is fed up with the whole boxing world. On the other hand, what alternative is there? He will probably already be considering going home to mother; perhaps there will be some awareness of the penalties of being branded a failure if he does so, even before Mateos spells them out to him brutally in the middle of Act I. There is plenty of material to go on; the best answers will be those that use the maximum amount of this material convincingly and also capture Kid's rather meek and hesitant voice, so ironic in a champion fighter.

Moratín

16 Context is important here. Candidates need to be aware that Francisca knows that Don Carlos is near, but has not yet met him: she is in a fever of hope and uncertainty. We also know that she dares not, or does not want to, defy her mother openly, but her thoughts are certainly not as obedient as her tongue. She also tells us she respects Don Diego but finds the idea of marrying him repellent. On that basis, the candidate ought to be able to figure out how Francisca would react to Irene's attempts to speak for her; the question whether she would really like to return to the convent; Don Diego's kindly speeches; Doña Irene's silly irrelevances about the godfather; and so on. It is very important to bear in mind that though 'imaginative' this is a passage-based question and so the best answers will trace

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Francisca's reactions to what is actually said, as detailed above. Weaker candidates will generalise, but may produce an acceptable impression of how Francisca would be feeling, given the situation: such answers will probably rate a mark of 13 or below. Of course, top-quality answers will not only respond fully to the text, but also capture Francisca's mild but determined voice.

- 17 This could be seen as a weak point in the play: there is nothing very *interesting* about Don Carlos, he is just the archetypical nice young man, so why the 'adoration'? On the other hand, he has no obvious weaknesses or vices, and there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his love for Francisca, or his honourable intentions towards her: he does nothing, as it were, to *undeserve* her. Most candidates will, I suspect, supply a character sketch of Don Carlos and then decide personally whether or not they think he deserves Doña Francisca's adoration; any well-supported arguments will of course be accepted, and almost the whole range of ability may be thus accommodated. However, a really perceptive candidate might argue that Don Carlos's ordinariness is the whole point: this being a *pièce à thèse*, the more representative he is of nice young men, the more convincing the argument that *all* nice young women ought to be entitled to marry nice young men of their choice, rather than unsuitable men of their parents' choice. Don Diego is unsuitable (does not deserve Francisca?) not because he is horrid or tyrannical – on the contrary – but simply because he is old.
- 18 This question may cause difficulty to (or be avoided by) the many candidates who will not have been taught to think of plays as plays, as opposed to a funny kind of novel. It should not present too many problems to candidates who are aware that plays are *spectacles*, or to those who are able to think on their feet. It could be approached from many angles; naturally, the more aspects are considered, the higher the mark is likely to be. Some candidates may be able to comment on the fact that pursuing the action through the night allows Moratín to respect the unity of time; in turn this concentrates the action, making the play more exciting for the audience. Then there is the fact that night is traditionally the time for secret intrigue: audiences would (and still will) be aware of this and their expectations will be heightened accordingly. The fact that the scene is an inn makes this night-time setting plausible: people gather together in an inn during the night and can interact, but when daylight comes they go their separate ways. Since many of the guests can be expected to be in bed and asleep, those who are not feel safer as they get on with their machinations – hence Francisca's mention of her mother being asleep in scene XIV – but they are usually wrong, hence the recurring surprises when people turn up unexpectedly. (Cf. the inn scenes in *Don Quijote* and also Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*, which uses some of the same effects and is subtitled 'The Mistakes of a Night'). As regards the stage setting, candidates with a little imagination should be able to appreciate the ongoing visual impact of having the actors standing out against a dark background. Note how the dialogue continually draws attention to the fact that it is dark, and to the expectation that daylight will clear things up: 'Con la luz del día veremos a este competidor', etc. At times the darkness is used to reflect an emotional state, as in scene XIII. Finally there are the single dramatic effects or allusions like the encounter of Don Diego and Don Carlos in scene XI. There is plenty to go on, but it will take a good candidate to pull the ideas together into a coherent whole. Probably we shall have to mark this question quite generously.

Mistral

- 19 Mistral's footnote is rather unfortunate here, because it identifies the *ella* of the poem with poetry and this simply begs candidates to decode. Hopefully the question is specific enough to discourage them from going too far in that unfortunate direction. It requires candidates (a) to identify colour images in the text, (b) to show how the poet *plays* with them – *not* 'uses them to convey a message'. Answers scoring 13 or above should have at least some elements of both (a) and (b). (Of course, the colour imagery does relate to ideas of what poetry is, or is about, and candidates may quite legitimately point this out; but that is not the primary focus of the question.) Candidates should be able to trace the notion of whiteness through verses 2-4: the word *blanca* appears only in the second verse, but the idea continues into the next two. Then there is an abrupt switch from white to red, which is managed in the same way: the word *roja* appears first, but the idea of redness is then developed more indirectly. Yellow and black follow. But the final image is one of colourlessness: the best answers should be able not only to appreciate the full colour range, but also to suggest why the poet sees this colourlessness as a culmination. Less able candidates will probably be able to discuss some of the more obvious colour imagery, without being able to give a coherent response to the whole poem.
- 20 & 21 The desired qualities in a poetry answer never vary: understanding of the poem, relevance to the question, detailed attention to the words, a well-supported personal response, and avoidance of unhelpful decoding, fulsome but empty praise of the poet/poem, irrelevant autobiographical detail (we had a lot of this in Mistral last June – mercifully less in November) and declarations that the poem is

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'fácil de entender' from candidates who manifestly do not understand it at all. Note that from now on we shall be pinning candidates down to particular poems in every question. This is mainly intended to stop them from choosing poems which they happen to know, but which cannot be made to fit the requirements of the question – or which have the sole merit of being very short. However, the unavoidable drawback of the present dispensation is that weak or lazy candidates will choose the question that contains the poem that they know, irrespective of what the question specifically asks. As usual, we shall judge such answers on their merits.

Where questions mention two poems, both poems need to be considered in some detail for a good mark. Too often, the second poem merits only a few scrawled lines as an afterthought. However, there is no need for a rigid fifty-fifty division. Note also that we **do not, ever**, ask candidates to compare poems. It seems almost impossible to wean some centres off this approach, and too often it leads to candidates trying, quite unnecessarily, to find points in common between chalk and cheese.

Vallejo

- 22 There is of course no one 'right answer' to this, although no answer is likely to score very much which does not comment on the 'key' to the Christmas Eve metaphor that Vallejo supplies in the tercets: the body of the poet's beloved is the 'epiphany', his poetry is the 'flocks by night', and her love is the newborn saviour, the 'child Jesus'. Weaker candidates may decide that once they have conveyed something like this, their work is done. We shall probably have to go at least to a mark of 10 for fairly coherent answers of this kind. For higher reward, candidates will need to consider what else in the poem relates to the ideas of feast, celebration, light, redemption, divine incarnation, etc. On top of that, good candidates are likely to consider the relevance of other readings of 'Nochebuena' on top of the primary 'Christmas' one. This is a very rich poem, and we shall of course be open to any well-supported comments and/or personal responses.

- 23 & 24 See notes on 20-21 above.