

Examiners' Report  
June 2018

GCE English Literature 9ET0 02

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# Introduction

This is a challenging paper due to the requirement to write about and compare two substantial prose texts in a relatively short time. Candidates dealt admirably with this requirement, demonstrating excellent knowledge and understanding of their chosen texts. Candidates seemed to enjoy the questions and some exceptional responses were seen. It was often evident that the novels had been thoroughly enjoyed, and candidates seemed to relish discussing and interpreting them.

Responses were seen on all 24 of the set texts, although some were significantly more popular than others. The Science and Society and Women and Society themes were by far the most popular, with Colonisation and its Aftermath and Crime and Detection being considered less often. *Frankenstein*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Dracula*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* were particularly popular this year, while *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *What Maisie Knew* were seen very infrequently. In all themes, answers covering the full range of marks were seen, although level 1 responses were very rare. Almost all answers covered two texts, and included at least one nineteenth century text. On the whole, candidates managed to balance the coverage of the two novels well.

The best responses were those which synthesised together all four assessment objectives to elicit a well thought out argument showing a comprehensive understanding of the texts. These answers maintained their focus on the question throughout the whole essay. Analysis of the texts was used to develop the overall argument, and contextual points were made relevant to the overall topic. The arguments within essays were often structured very effectively and contextual factors were integrated more fluently than seen in the last examination series. Less successful were those answers which attempted to treat the assessment objectives separately, for example adding contextual comments in a separate paragraph, or writing about a whole text before making any connections with the second.

Most candidates were well prepared to address A02, and were able to thoughtfully consider the writer's craft, and the author's intentions in using specific literary techniques. There was some very interesting analysis of the writers' use of imagery and symbolism in particular. The naming of features, particularly the labelling of word classes, was not always accurate. While candidates are rewarded for the use of appropriate literary terminology in A01, this should not be the primary focus of the essay, done at the expense of meaningful analysis. It would be more helpful to discuss the meanings created by a word or phrase than to label it with a literary term and say no more about it. There were several terms which were frequently misapplied (juxtaposition and foreshadowing most notably, as well as poetic terminology such as caesura and enjambment which are not really relevant to the study of prose). Candidates are reminded that the structure of prose texts can often be fruitfully analysed, and will demonstrate knowledge of the whole text and of the author's craft. While detailed word level analysis can often be very useful and sophisticated, it can sometimes make the focus on the text rather narrow if all of the words analysed are from one part of the text only.

Less successful responses tended to be weaker in AO1 & AO2, often recounting the story rather than analysing specific quotations or techniques. Perhaps candidates are worried that they need to cover as much of the novel as possible but this does not allow them time to demonstrate the focused analysis needed to achieve marks in the higher levels. There were a few responses which showed signs of a pre-learnt essay hastily adapted to the question asked but most candidates did well in thinking afresh about the question under exam conditions.

Almost all candidates considered relevant contextual factors well. Some candidates writing about more modern texts (such as *Never Let Me Go* or *The Handmaid's Tale*) struggled to write about

contexts in the absence of obvious historical events. Candidates studying these texts are reminded that there are many contextual factors that can be discussed. Those responses which achieved the best marks in A03 considered a variety of contextual factors in their responses, such as historical factors, social, cultural, literary and psychological influences.

Good introductions really matter, as do well-crafted conclusions. They can really lift an essay in how they make explicit connections between novels. Connections between the texts were made very effectively this year, with some responses clearly placing connections between the texts at the forefront of their responses. Despite this, some candidates clearly struggled with writing in a meaningful way about the connections, all too frequently resorting to general comparisons using 'similarly...' or 'on the other hand...'. Better responses connected texts in varied ways, for example through genre conventions, the use of specific literary features, narrative perspectives and contextual factors such as the writers' intentions. There are a number of examples of essays showing the different ways in which candidates have successfully connected their texts in this report.

It was wonderful to see so many answers which achieved level 5. These responses are characterised by taking an evaluative and critical approach to the texts. The level 5 descriptor 'evaluative' does not, however, mean that candidates are expected to evaluate the success or quality of the writers, which a number of responses attempted to do (for example, asserting that one novel was more successful at creating a sense of threat than the other, or even that one was better written). To evaluate a text means to interrogate the potential multiple meanings of quotes, the different ways in which texts can be connected, to consider the significance of contexts and to present a critical argument which asserts a point of view about the text in relation to the question.

Many candidates seemed to find the timing of the exam problematic, with a number of otherwise controlled essays ending somewhat abruptly. There were also a number of papers with very detailed plans, not all of which appeared in the actual essay that followed. Candidates may benefit from more practise at writing their plans quickly and keeping them relatively brief. The benefits of writing a plan were evident as these answers had a greater cogency and sharper sense of direction. They often maintained a better focus on the question. It can also be useful when considering the task to narrow down the broad essay topics into clearly defined lines of argument. This can help to make the task more manageable within the time restrictions of the exam. A number of examiners commented that handwriting was not always legible, perhaps because candidates were rushing to include as much as possible in the time. While examiners will, of course, do their best to decipher what has been written, it is worth bearing in mind that we cannot award marks if we cannot read the page.

Centres are reminded that A05 is not assessed on this paper. While critical perspectives can be usefully used to further an argument or indeed to provide contextual discussion (such as the responses of contemporary or modern audiences and critics to a text), simply inserting a critical quotation without reference to the question will rarely enhance the essay.

## Question 1

Many responses to this question focused on the effects of inequalities within society on individual characters. This provided a useful way into the question which the most successful answers were then able to broaden out into a discussion of authorial criticisms of society. Candidates were able to focus on a wide range of aspects of society, including issues surrounding social class, race, gender, sexuality, religion and education, as well as specific historical comments on concerns within 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain.

The focus of the question on society led to contextual factors being considered very successfully, and these comments were often well integrated into the arguments being put forward. Less secure responses tended to list the ways in which society could be criticised, rather than analysing the ways in which writers formulated these criticisms. However, many candidates showed a clear awareness of authorial intent, with some interesting comparisons being made between Dickens' use of Gradgrind to criticise utilitarianism and McEwan's use of Emily Tallis to criticise Chamberlain's policy of appeasement during the 1930s.

Contextual comments on *Atonement* tended to be slightly less successful, largely limited to rather vague ideas about class snobbery and prejudice without further development or specific exemplification. There also appeared to be some confusion about the time of writing, with several candidates confusing this with the time setting of the novel and asserting that McEwan was making contemporary comments on 1930s society.

*What Maisie Knew* was the least popular text, although it was pleasing to see that candidates answering on this novel were able to engage in meaningful discussions of 19<sup>th</sup> century changes to divorce laws and the moral questions which this raised.

This is the beginning of an essay on *The Color Purple* and *Hard Times* which was awarded an overall mark in level 5.

Both Charles Dickens and Alice Walker thoroughly criticise the patriarchal and racist aspects of their unequal societies through their novels 'Hard Times' and 'The Color Purple.' The cultural aspects of an unjust society in which black naive narrator, 'Celie' lives in are emphasised by 'womanist' Alice Walker in her novel 'The Color Purple,' alongside Dickens' criticisms of the Victorian society in which facts and knowledge are the epitome of life and fancy and imagination must be repressed in his novel 'Hard Times.' Both authors clearly communicate to the reader the criticisms of 1850s and 1900s society.

Both Dickens and Walker portray the Education system as unequal either in terms of limiting education for children, for example Celie in Walker's ~~novel~~ epistolary and ~~to~~ bildungsroman novel, or forcefully pushing children Tom and Louisa into a mundane system of regimented and systematic education.



This is a good example of a focused introduction. The candidate narrows down the question (the ways in which the writers criticise aspects of society) by selecting specific areas to focus on (criticisms of racism, patriarchy and injustice). There are also brief references to several contextual factors which the candidate returns to in more detail later in the essay. The introduction also begins to make connections between the texts.



If the question you are answering is very broad, use your introduction to narrow it down by outlining what areas you are going to discuss. Your introduction is also a good place to start comparing the texts overall before you start your detailed analysis and comparisons.

This essay on *Atonement* and *Hard Times* was given a mark at the bottom of level 5.

*Atonement* and *Hard Times* are both novels which ~~draw~~ cast a critical eye on society in the two separate eras in which they take place. They ~~settle~~ ~~can be both~~ can both be considered microcosms, drawing attention to wider problems in the wider social context, particularly issues around upbringing, class divisions and gender roles and ~~sex~~ expectation against the respective backdrops of the Industrial Revolution and the 1930s. ~~They~~ Although it may not initially



seem it, both novels can in fact be considered highly political.

In both novels, the authors appear to challenge two polar opposite ideas of upbringing: one in which fact is over-indulged and the other in which fancy and imagination are over-indulged. Both result in disastrous consequences, ~~highlighting~~ clearly criticising such parenting.

In *Hard Times*, Gradgrind raises his children on a harsh doctrine of facts, "taking childhood captive" and ensuring that they "never wander." Such a method of raising and educating children only has negative consequences. Dickens highlights the damaging impact through metaphors and symbolism. Upon being found peeping at the circus, Tom gives himself up to be taken home "like a machine", the simile conveying the dehumanising ~~and~~ and dehumanising effect of Gradgrind's system. Louisa's experiences of childhood, on the other hand, are related to "the drying up of every spring and fountain in her young heart as it gushed out." By comparing ~~it to water~~ using imagery of water, essential to life, Dickens conveys the necessity of imagination ~~and fancy~~ in humans. This need for a fancy is underscored by Dickens'

use of metaphor, ~~Marlow~~ suggesting Dickens is firmly in  
defense of fiction. As most 19<sup>th</sup> century, a ~~realist~~ realism  
novels, Dickens novels serves a didactic purpose of warning  
the reader against an such a fact-based system of  
upbringings. Clearly, he satirises the kind of ~~strict~~  
Unitarian education system which was in place  
during the Victorian era, criticising ~~his~~ contemporaries  
like Jeremy Bentham for their damaging ideology.

On the other side of the spectrum, McEwan  
criticises ~~an upbringing in~~ the kind of absent  
parenting seen in *Atonement*, resulting in <sup>Briony's</sup> ~~an~~ overly  
imaginative nature. ~~She is~~ Migraines prevent  
Emily Tallis from "giving her children all a mother  
should" and as a result, Briony is "lost to  
her writing fantasies." The use of the ~~verb~~  
adjective "lost" highlights Briony's lack of  
grounding in reality, prophetic of ~~her~~ the  
"crime" that she later commits when she is  
unable to distinguish between what is real and  
what is not. As a consequence of this poor  
upbringing, characteristic of a typical upper class  
upbringing during the 1930s when children were  
often raised by ~~servant~~ staff rather than their  
mothers, Robbie's life is "ruined". Briony finds  
~~struggles~~ it "difficult to come back" from  
her own imagination, ~~to the factual situation~~

to Robbere's misfortune. The truth is "ghostly as invention" in the novel, a fact which is emphasized by ~~McEwan's lack of~~ the postmodernist features of unreliable narration and indeterminacy. McEwan is clearly critical of such a distant style of parenting.

Both novels are also highly critical of ~~classist~~ ~~classism~~ ~~classicism~~ class prejudice which existed during the mid 1800s and 1930s. In both novels, the lower classes are used as ~~the~~ scapegoats for the errors of the upper classes. In *Hard Times*, Dickens creates empathy for Stephen Blackpool through pathos, describing him as the "honestest" and "truest" lad. This heightens the reader's outrage when he is blamed for robbing the bank. Classism is evident in Mr Bounderby's bold statement that any Hand is "a man that's fit for anything lad." The very fact that the workers are referred to as "Hands" highlights the way in which they are depersonalized and valued only for their manual labor. Dickens, however, intrudes on the narrative and contradicts Bounderby's prejudiced view of the lower classes, claiming that it is one of "the popular fictions of Cockton." Dickens was

very concerned about workers' rights, visiting ~~at~~ the factories in Preston and speaking in favour of the rights of the working classes. This is clearly displayed in *Hard Times* and, ~~therefore~~ *Coleridge* could even be considered a microcosm of the pain and sufferings endured by the lower classes that was experienced across the macrocosm.

Similarly, class prejudices are incredibly prevalent in *Atonement*. Just as Tom in *Hard Times* is "so far safe" and doesn't have to deal with the consequences of robbing the bank, Paul Marshall is "immune" to any accusations of sexual assault due to his upper class status. McEwan criticises the upper classes' readiness to blame the lower classes through the false accusations against Robbie. Very quickly, ~~the~~ and on minimal evidence "the general view" ~~had formed~~ ~~that~~ forms that "Mr Turner was a dangerous man." ~~At~~ Similar to the Hands in *Hard Times*, Robbie is depersonalised by ~~refer~~ being referred to as ~~Mr~~ Mr Turner. This plays into the upper class feeling of viewing the lower classes as homogeneous. Emily Tallis' own prejudice towards Robbie can be considered symbolic of the wider prejudice against lower classes. During the 1930s, class divisions were

very much prevalent. It was only after the war that the classes started to dissolve. Emily ~~is~~ clearly holds a grudge against Robbie, even prior to his "crime", viewing Jack's patronage of him as "meddling". McEwan is clearly in favour of a class-free society, as is evidenced at the novel's epilogue when the Tallis bank, symbolic of rigid class division, becomes the Tilney hotel, reflecting the dissolution of classes. As a hotel, it "embraced more human happiness", suggesting that a society free of class divisions is far happier.

Finally, both novels draw attention to and critique issues around ~~gender and men~~ gender roles. In *Hard Times*, women are greatly repressed by expectations, something which Dickens particularly explores through Louisa through the symbolism of fire. During the day "there seems to be nothing there, but insid'ous and monotonous smoke, ~~but~~ Yet when the night comes, Fire bursts out." Fire is symbolic of <sup>the</sup> passion and potential of women, but this has been repressed by ~~the~~ rigid expectations of gender. Women are expected to be the Angel of the House, catering to their husband's every whim and need,

but Dickens warns us of ~~it~~ that "all closely impioned forces tend and destroy", ~~the~~ highlighting the damaging nature of treating women in this way.

Similarly, *Atonement* draws attention to the way in which women are bound and restricted by marriage.

Emily is a "wronged wife", living out home with her children whilst her husband continues to cheat on her. She lives in an "invalid's shadow land" due to her crippling migraines, which could also be ~~just~~ symbolic of the way women were repressed during the 1930s. Although ~~to~~ more and more women were working ~~at~~ during the 1930s, the Marriage Bar prevented many women from working after marriage, trapping them in the domestic sphere, as McEwan conveys. ~~Emily's status as an "invalid"~~ Similarly, Mrs Gradgrind is also considered an invalid in *Hard Times*, being described as ~~an~~ "weebley smother, and giving no other sign of vitality." Both women ~~acted~~ and their status as "invalids" could be considered a metaphor for the way in which society restricted and repressed women.

In conclusion, both novels are highly political and speak out against injustices in society like the repression of women, poor upbringing

and class prejudice. Both can be considered to serve a ~~did~~ didactic purpose in this sense as they preach the importance of equality and love. ~~Such a mes~~ Although ~~such~~ such issues have ~~be~~ been there has been progress on such issues since the novels have been written, the message is as relevant now as ~~it was~~ ever, which is why these books continue to be read all over the world.



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Examiner Comments

This essay is very good at integrating the comments on contexts, comparisons and analysis of the writer's craft. The argument has three distinct strands; the candidate examines the authors' criticisms of children's upbringing, social class structures and gender roles. This makes for a very well structured essay.



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Examiner Tip

A useful way of structuring your essay is to have clear lines of argument in each section.

## Question 2

'The role of education, formal or informal, in the lives of characters'

The key to success in this question was to consider not only education in the abstract, but the impact it had upon characters, and most answers were able to closely analyse characters in the texts. There were interesting comparisons made between the impact of different styles of education in the novels, such as the very formal, reductionist utilitarian approach in *Hard Times*, the informal education Celie receives from other women, the ambiguous social and moral education of Maisie and Briony's liberal education and need for self-expression in a post-war context. Many responses also considered the lack of education, whether formal or in aspects of personal or social growth. Analysis of writer's craft varied considerably in responses, from simplistic comments about the repetition of 'facts!' in *Hard Times* to much more in depth consideration of narrative voice.

An effective approach was seen in essays which contrasted *Hard Times* and *Atonement*, the former showing the danger of failing to educate and encourage imagination while the latter criticizing unrestrained imagination. The similarity between these texts was also noted as both gaps in education led to the condemning of an innocent man. This was seen as representative of the poor treatment of the working class by the upper classes.



Although 'What Maisie Knew' was written in the Victorian era and 'Atonement' was written in the inter-war years, both James Henry James and Ian McEwan explore the importance of the role of education. Both authors explore the aspect of moral education which is obtained through personal experiences. However James conveys the role of education as something which eventually leads to Maisie's ~~understanding~~ <sup>understanding</sup> maturation and ~~acknowledgement~~ <sup>ability to recognise</sup> of the corrupting adult forces that surround her. Whereas McEwan conveys ~~ed education~~ a lack of education to be destructive and dangerous on the child protagonist.

Both authors begin their novels with ~~the~~ ~~or~~ ~~by~~ exaggerating the innocence and subsequent lack of education in the two child protagonists. For example in ~~that~~ chapter 1 of 'What Maisie Knew', James emphasises how Maisie's "little word was phantasmagorical". The ~~use of~~ use of the adjective "phantasmagorical" is ~~hyperbolic~~ hyperbolic and demonstrates to the reader that ~~the~~ Maisie perception of the real world was jumbled and abstract. Clearly James has constructed the novel in this way to highlight our child protagonists' lack of education in understanding the real world. This can also be ~~Ernst~~ <sup>seen similar</sup> contrasted to 'Atonement' as

Briary ~~costs~~ bases her reality on fairytales. Furthermore, ~~From~~ James has deliberately constructed the text to be both complex and difficult to understand, ~~thus presenting~~ ~~us with~~ The use of complex vocabulary and long sentences further aids to ~~this~~ the ambiguity of the text. <sup>and gives it an almost dream-like ~~the~~ structure.</sup> It is therefore through this that we are presented with the concept of the stream of consciousness. Most interestingly Henry James' brother, William, came up with the theory of consciousness whereby ~~we~~ ~~must~~ ~~at~~ the reader must interpret the difference between what the ~~author~~ ~~is~~ narrator ~~and~~ writes and what they actually see. Overall, James explains the role of education to be minimal and almost nonexistent in ~~chap~~ the beginning of the novel.

However this is ultimately changed in chapter 17 as we see ~~the~~ Maisie's decline in the need to simplify and understand complex adult situations. ~~as~~ She is 'initiated into adulthood' and as a result ~~she~~ ~~is~~ ~~saturated~~ her education is 'saturated with knowledge' and 'directed to diplomacy'.

Similarly, McEwan exaggerates the importance of the role of education in enabling children to understand the ~~real~~ adult world. Much like ~~B~~ Maisie, Briary

~~re~~ relies on fantasy and imagination to make sense of the adult world. For example in Chapter 10 Briary ~~of~~ refers to Robbie as a "maniac. The man's a maniac". This is ~~signif~~ Here Briary demonstrates a lack of proper education as she misuses the adjective "maniac". In calling him crazy she is in fact naïve towards ~~Robbie and Cecilia's love~~ the emotion of love and Robbie and Cecilia's relationship. This also links to her fairytales as it emphasises one's ~~need to have~~ undying need to have to categorise notions into good and bad. One could agree that this lack of education is due to the fact that, <sup>in</sup> 1930s Britain, children of an upper-middle class had a restricted ~~upbr~~ and sheltered upbringing as they would barely leave the house and thus had little knowledge of the normalities of ~~soci~~ and conventions of society. Ultimately, therefore McEwan similarly to James exaggerates the ~~lack~~ role of education as being absent and thereby hindering the child protagonist's development in the adult world. Perhaps they have done this to criticise society and highlight the importance of a good educational upbringing.



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This essay is very good in AO2. The candidate focuses closely on individual words and the meanings they create, but also considers narrative style and shows their knowledge of the whole text.



In your analysis of the writer's craft, try to balance close analysis of individual words with comments about the overall structure, style and narrative of the whole text.

## Question 3

'Attitudes to race'

Very few answers were seen on *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, while *Heart of Darkness* was very popular, paired with either *The Lonely Londoners* or *A Passage to India*. The coverage of AO3 in this theme was well considered compared to last year. The question lent itself to relevant contextual discussion of Belgian Imperialism in the Congo and British colonisation and its legacy, and some candidates drew interesting and thought-provoking parallels with contemporary issues such as the Windrush scandal. There were interesting comparisons made between modern and contemporary approaches to race with some excellent focus on the changing views on Conrad's approach. A successful approach was to consider how Conrad and Forster presented European races as well as African/Indian, for example finding the 'ugliness' and 'savagery' expected of the Congolese present in European characters, and the exposure of the hypocrisy and injustice of the British in India. Comparisons between these different contexts were often effective and, in some cases, drew thoughtful conclusions regarding the portrayal of race in literature.

Most answers drew connections between language used in the text and attitudes to race with some thoughtful analysis of the writers' aims and the presentation of the other. There were a number of strong analyses of Selvon's craft and the impact of using non-standard English in his characterisation. One candidate commented that the African natives in *Heart of Darkness* were described as 'nameless' and 'savages', making them seem 'inferior and a different species to the Europeans, making the ability to commit atrocities much easier'. This was a good example of a perceptive comment upon a fairly straightforward example which focuses well on how a writer shapes meaning within a text.

This essay on *Heart of Darkness* and *A Passage to India* received a high level 5 mark, gaining full marks for AO3 and AO4.

Compare the ways in which Conrad and Forster present attitudes towards race.

Conrad and Forster explore attitudes towards race in 'Heart of Darkness' and 'A Passage to India'. Both writers demonstrate ~~keen~~ more progressive attitudes than their peers regarding race, but still display beliefs commonly held about coloured people, or natives. The authors present attitudes towards race through examining the ways in which colonisers perceive themselves, and ~~contrasting it with their view of the~~ way in which they view natives, as well as ~~demonstrating belief~~.

Both authors present attitudes towards race through ~~exam~~ exploring the ways in which colonisers perceived themselves. In both novels, ~~Europe~~ colonisers view themselves as superior to the native population.

In 'A Passage to India', Mrs Turton remarks 'You're superior to them, anyway. Don't forget that'. She believes that the English are ~~superior to the natives~~, inherently superior to the natives, and uses this belief to justify her impolite behaviour. Mc Bryde ~~believes~~ is another example of a character who ~~believes he is superior to~~ demonstrates a similar belief. He is ~~one of the more progressive~~ characters, yet he ~~bel~~ ~~en~~ speaks the pseudoscientific theories that were popular at the time: 'All unfortunate natives are criminals at heart for the simple reason that they live south of latitude 30.'

Similarly, in *Heart of Darkness*, the Aint believes that Marlow is a 'emissary of light' bringing enlightenment to the native countries. The narrator believes colonisers

one 'beams of the space from the great sacred fire'; suggest the so Europeans are brave courageous and noble savants, who like Prometheus bringing fire to the humanity, bring knowledge and civilisation to the natives living in darkness. This was a view commonly held at the time, and it was one propagated by imperial propaganda in newspapers, which extolled <sup>its</sup> ~~the~~ virtues - what Marlow refers to as 'rot'. In reality, however, the Europeans ~~bring~~ only bring darkness to the continent; they are not agents of good but agents of evil. ~~Both authors undermine~~ Kurtz ~~to present himself as a god~~ believes he is a God, and unites 'we must approach with the might as of a deity'. To the ~~two~~ Kurtz, ~~natives are~~ Europeans ~~are~~ one far more evolved than natives, and therefore they have a duty to civilise them.

Both authors undermine these views ~~about race~~ about the alleged superiority of the white race. Fielding, for example, said 'so-called white races are really pinko-gray'. His ~~comment~~ simple observation earns him criticism from other club members, because he is undermining the staple unspoken 'truth' that they are better than natives. 'White' to the Europeans means ~~more~~ moral superiority, <sup>and</sup> greater intellectual power; if white were simply a colour, then ~~he would be~~ the English would not be superior to Indians, and therefore the Raj ~~is~~ should not exist. Forster ~~often~~ satirises this <sup>sense of superior</sup> ~~view point~~, and labelled the English as people with 'well-developed bodies, fairly developed minds, and undeveloped hearts'. <sup>106x</sup>

Conrad is ~~less more~~ hesitant Marlow, and by extension Conrad is ~~less eag~~ more hesitant to undermine superiority of the European. Marlow demonstrates that the Europeans are ~~as savage as the~~ natives they too have the potential to be as savage as the natives they look down upon. Marlow uses the symbol of the 'white sepulchre', a phrase used by Christ to condemn the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, to similarly condemn ~~the pilgrims~~ of the sepulchre Europeans. ~~White~~ The outer appearance <sup>of the sepulchre</sup> seems beautiful and pure, ~~it is~~ representing <sup>the</sup> Eurocentric belief in their cultural superiority. However, the rotting corpse within the sepulchre ~~is~~ demonstrates the horrors of ~~that~~ <sup>which</sup> ~~human~~ Europeans are capable of committing. Conrad was disgusted by the Europeans. In reality, their veneer of civilisation is hollow, and can easily be torn apart to reveal a 'heart of darkness'.

Both authors ~~demonstrate~~ explore the ways in which colonisers perceive natives, which is closely related to the way in which they perceive themselves. In both novels, Europeans largely regard the natives as inferior. In 'A Passage to India', the ~~English~~ English view Indians as dangerous, ~~and even~~ which is ironic, as ~~they~~ the former possess a ~~greater~~ much greater insight to the latter. The ~~area~~ view of Indians ~~are~~ as criminals was engrained into ~~the~~ the minds of Anglo-Indians after the Indian Mutiny in 1857. The Stories of the European, when women and children were passed down to horrified successive generations. This is seen in Chapter 20, when the English



trip themselves up into a state of hysteria over the fact apparently Indians. ~~Mrs~~ ~~Blakiston~~ ~~is~~ ~~the~~ Coloured races were often viewed as lusting after white women, ~~under~~ a stereotype which is reflected in the men protecting the 'beautiful but brainless' Mrs Blakiston, who fears the 'niggers [attacking]'. She ~~is a~~ ~~symbol~~ is a symbol of ~~that~~ 'all that is worth fighting for' and conjures up feelings toxic inhibition within the men, which causes them to view Indians as sexual predators. ~~Smiles~~ Mr Bryde, one of the more progressive characters believes that 'all unfortunate niggers are criminals at heart'; ~~pseudoscientific~~ ~~is~~ espousing pseudoscientific beliefs that were popular at the time. His beliefs only make sense with an engrained sense of superiority, and suggest that the Indians are all, without exception, predisposed to be sinful.<sup>2</sup>

In 'Heart of Darkness', Marlow's ~~position~~ has an ambiguous attitude towards the race of the natives. On one hand, he refers to them as 'savages', and 'prehistoric men', suggesting that the natives are animistic and less evolved than himself. However, ~~the~~ ~~or~~ these terms were also in popular use at the time, and would not have been considered prejudicial to a contemporary audience. He ~~acknowledges~~ Furthermore, he acknowledges similarities between natives and Europeans, observing that their humanity is 'like yours', and that there is a 'remote kinship' between natives and them. Marlow remarks 'They were not inhuman'; a summary of his beliefs towards them; he acknowledges that

The natives are not animals, but the double negative demonstrates his unease reluctance to admit this fact. This Most Europeans thought natives were sub-human, so Conrad's Marlow's statements are progressive considering his the beliefs of his peers.

In conclusion, Forster and Conrad demonstrate attitudes towards race by exploring the beliefs of colonisers regarding themselves and the natives. White men and women were considered to be superior, whilst natives were considered to be inferior. This provided the justification for colonisation. Forster undermines ~~that~~ these beliefs of ~~superiority~~ in the superiority of white men, while Conrad is less more hesitant to do so, but shows that white men and black men are shown ~~a similar~~ to the same 'heart of darkness'. Racial barriers are clearer in 'Heart of Darkness', where the natives and Europeans cannot communicate, whilst in 'A Passage to India', the barriers are more implicit.

1x The English Anglo-Indians also believe that they should stick together in the cause of race solidarity against the Indians. Mc Bryde says that the Fielding must 'for the line' - no room is allowed for conformity must be adhered to.

2x Mc Bryde ~~also~~ refers to Indians as 'pitch'; to touch an Indian is to become tainted.



This essay is particularly good at comparing contextual factors. Contexts and comparisons are at the heart of the essay and are addressed in almost every paragraph.

## Question 4

'Societies undergoing change'

Very few candidates tackled this question, and there was a tendency in those who did to focus on characters undergoing changes rather than on societies. There were, however, some very successful answers considering the decline of the British Empire and changing views on imperialism, as well as the clash of cultures in London upon the arrival of the Caribbean migrants.

This extract is taken from an essay on *Heart of Darkness* and *A Passage To India*, which was given high level 5 marks, and gained full marks in AO1 and AO2.

Bath novels also adopt symbolism through ~~the~~ to reflect a resistance to undergoing social change. The fact that the river "earth seemed unearthly" as Marlow travels river explores the futility of the human mind. Indeed, the long sentence form Conrad adopts when ~~expl~~ describing the

"trees, trees, millions of trees, massive, immense, running up high", creates an image of natural power which traps the men and juxtaposes their <sup>passive</sup> inability to comprehend Africa. This seems to suggest that the social change colonialism brings will never transcend the "prehistoric" aspects of Africa that are too powerful to be controlled. Rooster's "Merabber Caros" also reflect this idea; ~~being~~ <sup>being</sup> described as "primal" they reflect the moments in history before man had imposed on the natural world and attempted to control and enforce their power. ~~Both~~ <sup>Both</sup> Conrad and Porter travelled into the respective lands, and Conrad himself kept a diary of his time in the Congo in which he highlights the immense power of the natural world. Indeed, the all-reducing impact of the "BO-oom" which makes everything "identical" be it "purity" or "filth" conveys an ominous message and disorients the minds of Goppears, who appear futile and cannot cause their change of society to extend to the power of the natural world. ~~Indeed~~ Therefore, both writers reflect societies undergoing change, yet highlight the limitations of this change as it fails to encompass and cannot extend over the whole nation. This reflects the displacement of Colonisers in foreign lands and thus suggests the imposed social order is perhaps unjustifiable.



This is a good example of how comparisons can be made by focusing on the writers' use of a particular literary feature, in this case the use of nature symbolism. The candidate is also good at refocusing their argument at the end of this section to make sure they stay focused on the question.

## Question 5

'The darker side of humanity'

All 4 of the texts were seen in various combinations. It was notable that there were a significant number of essays which were very narrative in nature, often recounting plot at length with very little focus on the writer's craft. Candidates are advised to assume that the examiner is familiar with the intricacies of the plot and to make points which directly answer the question in order to meet the requirements of AO1. Candidates who performed well linked the texts clearly in a number of ways, such as discussing the symbol of the snake in *Lady Audley's Secret* and *In Cold Blood*. Weaker candidates tended to make general and superficial connections, often to do with genre similarities.

Some candidates struggled to make meaningful contextual points in questions 5 and 6, with some essays containing very little or only very vague contextual comment. Generally, contextual analysis was stronger on the two nineteenth century texts, where historical and cultural contexts could be discussed, however there were still problems with integrating these contextual comments into the essay in order to make them relevant to the question. *The Murder Room* proved problematic in terms of meaningful contextual analysis – most candidates struggled with this beyond pointing out obvious features of the crime genre. Many mentioned the four motives for crime listed in *The Murder Room* as "love, lust, lucre, loathing," but struggled to explicitly link this to the 'darker side of humanity.' Similarly, context in *In Cold Blood* was often limited to either Capote's homosexual obsession with Perry or the lack of effective psychological analysis of the accused.

Better contextual responses included comparisons of Braddon and James, who were noted as unusual since their novels portrayed female villains, subverting the stereotype of 'the Angel in the House' and threatening the stability of patriarchal society. There were interesting discussions of madness as a dark facet of humanity, with comments on how this might be understood by contemporary and modern readers. Others wrote of the inherent greed of people, particularly the upper classes, as they turned to crime to maintain their lifestyle (like Godfrey Ablewhite in *The Moonstone*) while others thought about survival where crime was driven by the unmet needs of those lowest in society, ignored by an unsympathetic hierarchical system (Lady Audley, Perry Smith). Here, the 'nature/nurture debate' was often considered.

This extract from an essay on *The Moonstone* and *In Cold Blood* was given high level 5 marks.

Detective and Crime fiction powerfully portrays the 'darker side of humanity' in order to explore the criminal mind and to engage the reader. Truman Capote's <sup>journalistic</sup> non-fiction novel, In Cold Blood, and Wilkie Collins' sensation epistolary novel, The Moonstone, were written almost 100 years apart. Nevertheless, they both focus on mankind's darker side by focusing on violence and oppression. Capote expands on this presentation to highlight injustice in <sup>1960s</sup> American society, whilst Collins<sup>20</sup> criticises the intolerant nature of Victorian Society.



~~In both~~ Collins and Capote initially present the darker side of humanity by exploring violence. In Cold Blood presents ~~the~~ the ~~story~~ murder of the Clutter family and Capote creates horror through ~~the~~ ~~actions~~ Dick and Perry's actions. The <sup>childhood</sup> ~~image~~ image of Nancy's "blood-soaked teddy bear" emphasises how vulnerable the Clutter families were <sup>and the abhorant nature of</sup> ~~this is further~~ presented through ~~the image of their possessions being burnt and becoming "smoke" this crime.~~ ~~Dick's~~ Gerald Clarke has viewed the viewed Dick and Perry, the murderers, as the 'other America'; the poor and the misbegotten. This reflects on the evil in human nature because of ~~their~~ the lack of value <sup>they</sup> attach to human life. For example Dick boasts "boy we sure splattered him!" when they run over a dog. The excited tone is highly disturbing along with the semi-onomatopoeic <sup>eric</sup> ~~word~~ word "splattered", which presents their love of killing and their lack of <sup>remorse.</sup> ~~remorse.~~

To a certain extent, this is similar to Collins' presentation of

the three Indian jugglers in 'The Moonstone'. Mr Murwhaite's belief that they care "just as much about killing a man as [Betteredge] cares about emptying the ashes out of his pipe." This suggests that, like Dick and Perry, the three Indians ~~also~~ do not regard life as sacred. Undoubtedly, this presents the Indians as terrifying. However, this also reflects on the ~~disturb~~ disturbing nature of <sup>British</sup> ~~Victorian~~ society, which ~~also~~ colonized large areas of Africa, the Americas and Asia. John Merncastle symbolises the greed of the British Empire and the image of the "dagger dripping blood" at ~~Sedgah~~ ~~Seangata~~ Seringapatam implicates him as a murderer. The use of alliteration and the word "dripping" emphasises the violence of the British Empire. Therefore, Collins' presentation of the darker side of human nature may be ~~more~~ fairly ~~controversial~~ controversial because he may implicate the British Army ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~spread~~ as ~~the~~ a destructive and deadly force. Overall, whilst both Capote and

Collins suggest that a ~~key~~<sup>key</sup> flaw of human nature is violence, Collins develops this further by focusing on the origins of violence.



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Examiner Comments

This essay is particularly good at making different types of connections; the candidate makes connections through genre, themes and contexts. At the end of each section of the essay they return to their overall argument in order to maintain their focus on the question and develop their ideas.



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Examiner Tip

Remember that comparisons can be made in a number of different ways; for example through genre, conventions, literary techniques, narrative voices, authorial style, contexts, authorial intentions and themes.

## Question 6

'Use a range of points of view'

This was a question with relatively few responses, and in some cases tended to lead to rather narrow essays which listed different narrative perspectives with little consideration of their effects. Better responses focused on the writers' use of narrators, tone and perspective. *The Moonstone* was written about particularly well, with some thoughtful discussion of the use of several unreliable narrators (particularly Betteredge) and the effects this had upon the mystery and suspense of the novel. Some weaker responses struggled to cover a range of perspectives (particularly in *The Murder Room*) and wrote only about one, therefore failing to fully address the terms of the question.

## Question 7

'Create a sense of threat'

This was by far the most popular question on the paper and produced some exceptional answers. Better answers focused on the ways in which writers *created* a sense of threat, whereas weaker responses tended to list examples of threats faced by individual characters in their chosen texts. It was pleasing to see so many different ways of addressing the question, for example focusing on; threats to society, religion, nature, morality, human life, the threat of patriarchy towards women and the threats posed by individuals towards a regime. Many wrote about the threat posed by science and its misuse, and drew distinctions between external threats (such as the threat to society posed by Frankenstein's creature) and internal threats (such as the threat Gilead poses to Offred's sense of personal identity or the threat of the clones' passivity to their future status).

Many students successfully wrote about the structure of the novels and the authors' use of narrative voices in creating a sense of threat, for example Atwood's use of the Historical Notes to reveal that Offred's narrative is framed by a male voice and therefore her identity is still being threatened. Weaker candidates tended to use the same, rather unvaried textual examples (chapter 5 of *Frankenstein*, particularly the 'dreary night in November', and the description of the Handmaids' clothing and their designation as 'two-legged wombs'). While these quotes could certainly be used successfully, they needed to be analysed fully with consideration of the literary techniques being used by the authors in order to create a sense of threat. They were not always the most useful examples to choose to answer this question, and candidates often failed to demonstrate their knowledge of the full text by maintaining such a narrow focus on quotes from the beginning of the novels. The manipulation of language was noted in both Atwood's and Ishiguro's texts; threat was seen in the control of women's access to knowledge and expression and in the potential for language to foment revolution, while the clones' use of euphemism to avoid confronting the stark reality of their situation was seen as creating an oppressive and threatening atmosphere.

Contextual factors were dealt with effectively in the main. A useful approach was to link the sense of threat created in the texts to the perceived threats in the societies the authors lived in. There were some insightful comments on feminist readings of *Frankenstein* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, resulting in particularly effective comparisons between the texts. Contemporary scientific advances were often discussed in relation to *Frankenstein* and *Never Let Me Go*; the best responses went on to consider the ethical issues these raised as threats to society, while weaker answers referred in passing to Galvanism/the cloning of Dolly the sheep without making a relevant link to the question. Contextual points about *Never Let Me Go* were significantly improved compared to last summer's exam; interesting ideas included the link to education and the lower classes being 'kept in their places' as a comparison to the clones and their education, society's obsession with death and wanting to live as long as possible, and the moral and philosophical discussions about cloning and medical science. Some focused on the circumstances of the original publication in a fairly general way (e.g. the rise of the New Right under Reagan for *The Handmaid's Tale*, Romanticism for *Frankenstein*). Better answers took these ideas further and explored the threats these developments might pose, sometimes making insightful connections with issues of current relevance, such as 'post-truth' politics and Trump's negotiations with North Korea. Fewer descriptive accounts of the author's lives were seen than in previous series, which suggests that candidates had successfully been taught to be more selective in their use of relevant contextual material.

This essay on *The War of the Worlds* and *Never Let Me Go* was awarded full marks.

**Please write the titles of your chosen texts below:**

Text 1:

The War of The Worlds

Text 2: Never Let Me Go.

Both 'The War of the Worlds' ('War') and 'Never Let Me Go' ('Never') present visions of threatening possible futures via the medium of ~~speculative fiction~~ speculative fiction. Whereas Wells envisions an immediate threat that evokes primitive responses in the form of an alien invasion, Ishiguro depicts an insidious and inescapable social condition that epitomises dystopia <sup>and</sup> that borders on the visceral. Despite their differing threats, both writers succeed in delivering two tales that transcend time and reality to retain a sense of threat amid scientific advances.

Narrative perspective and structure is used effectively by both writers to present their differing threats. Although 'War' and 'Never'

Share a self-conscious first person perspective, the narrators are used to different effects. Wells's unnamed narrator is detached, unemotional and objective, a style that Wells transferred from his career as a journalist. Although this style means that 'War' lacks the emotional investment Ishiguro's objective narrator Kathy demands, Wells ensures that his narrator is the perfect channel for information. He is able to present the reader with a descriptive panoramic view of <sup>the</sup> events that unfold under the threat of the Martians. Kathy is however reliant on her memories, and regularly admits her fallibility: "Or maybe I'm remembering it wrong." She assumes the reader is a fellow clone ("I don't know what it was like where you were") and as a result leaves a huge amount unsaid. Superficially, this renders 'Never' less effective in conveying an explicit threat in comparison to 'War', but when one takes into account the society of which Kathy is a product, her vernacular, limited perspective makes perfect sense. Ishiguro reveals details of the threat in a pieced structure in order to reflect the entire indoctrination of the clones. The organic structure also serves to convey

the ~~inherent~~ ~~social~~ inescapable threat that always awaits the clones, which is a stark contrast to the episodic, sudden and fragmented structure of 'War', which was originally written in serialised form in Pearson's Magazine. The perspectives therefore serve to relay the threats to the reader in the most appropriate form in order to reflect the nature of the threat, something that is reinforced in the structure: 'War' varies in extremes to convey the immediate danger whereas 'Never' is more consistent and ambiguous in order to present a diffuse enemy.

Wells and Ishiguro both employ verisimilitude in order to present realities that are familiar but infused with threat ~~so that readers~~ ~~simultaneously find~~ to lend the texts credibility. ~~and~~ Wells uses an asyndetic list of civilians to present the illusion of normality: "a couple of cyclists, a jobbing gardener...", the ~~per~~ proper noun "Cregg the butcher" adds plausibility on a personal level. Similarly Ishiguro presents an idyllic childhood with everyday details to present a recognisable reality. In many ways, Wells's presentation of threat is more credible than Ishiguro's because



a parallel narrative in the form of the brother in London is provided to give external validation and to convey the scale of the threat. Focalisers are also used in the form of place names such as "Woking Station" to enable readers to extrapolate further details. Although Kathy's word has no external validation, Ishiguro also uses focalisers in the form of characters in order to present facets of the nameless, faceless society that is the threat. Miss Lucy, for example, is the voice of rebellion, "The problem, as I see it, is you've been told and not told", and she disappears under mysterious circumstances. Hailsham is in itself a synecdoche for the cloning programme. The verisimilitude of 'Never' is at once exaggerated and compromised by Kathy's unreliability. She utilises meiosis as opposed to the hyperbole in 'War', relating barbaric acts in a declarative manner with perverted euphemisms such as "donor" and "complete". This successfully reflects the way in which the clones "have been told and not told" which makes 'Never' seem all the more threatening because the clones don't even realise they've been indoctrinated into a society that can ensure members accept such a

fate ~~do~~ docilely must be one to be feared. Although 'War' is much more successful in providing an objectively credible sense of threat, 'Never' is a sly and commendable demonstration of the threat itself through its deceptively impaired verisimilitude.

Both writers use the Other in order to deliver threat. In 'War' the Martians are themselves the threat. Wells uses repulsive and bestial imagery such as "mouth... dropped saliva"; "the whole creature heaved... convulsively" to deliver immediate threat. The Martians however present an uncanny resemblance to humans, having "one might say, a face." The most influential contextual factor that shaped 'War' was Wells's keen interest in Darwinism, fostered under the auspices of Thomas Huxley in 1884. The Martians may in fact be the caricature of what humanity may evolve into, especially when the parallels in colonialism are ~~to~~ considered. Via this projection, Wells suggests that the true threat may in actual fact be ourselves. By linking both the Martians and the clones closely to human beings, each writer makes the threats more terrifying than had they simply been inhuman. The clones are

rejected despite their human likeness. They're even mistaken for "normals" at the art gallery. The most significant contextual factor that shaped 'Never' was Ishiguro's concerns with genetic modification. Having moved from Nagasaki to England aged 5 in 1960, ~~he~~ it is safe to assume that he understands what it is like to be an outsider. Through his 'Outsider fiction', Ishiguro transmutes his fears of what genetic modification may entail in terms of social stratas. Already Haulsham as a "privileged estate" that gets "peoples' backs up", both of which connote elitism. Genetic modification is presented as a threat in 'Never' by the way in which the clones are treated as inferior. Already controversy surrounds cloning, as exemplified by South Korea's cloning of human embryos in 2004. Although 'War' perfectly encapsulated the fear of the Other as seen through the eyes of Wells and his contemporaries, Ishiguro's presentation speaks to us more clearly due to its modern relevance. The explicit horror of Wells's explicit descriptions of the Martians and their ~~the~~ sheer otherness is as equally as threatening as Ishiguro's <sup>threat which we find</sup> more philosophical and psychological. ~~the~~

~~threat~~. To conclude, it is evident that both texts present climates of threat. Whereas Wells is explicit in his depiction of a stereotypical monster, Ishiguro presents an implicit and nameless threat which ultimately remains undefeated by the close of the novel. It is imperative to remember that the passage of time greatly influences our modern perception of the threat Wells presents. A fear of science developing faster than we are able to understand is a more relevant topic to a modern audience now tediously overfamiliar with alien invasions. Despite the fact that the novelty of the threat depicted in 'War' granted it such gravity upon publication specifically, the Martians remain a terrifying prospect. <sup>however</sup> Ishiguro's depiction of threat is hauntingly relevant and by attaching parallels of his skewed alternate reality to modern day <sup>it is</sup> <sup>ed</sup> readers it is startlingly immediate as opposed to Wells's dated depiction. Ultimately, what grants 'Never' such ~~terror~~ <sup>terror</sup> is the intangibility of the threat, a threat that is much closer to modern day. <sup>Wells ensure that</sup> At ~~least~~ the Londoners in 'War' had a solid threat to rise up against whereas Ishiguro suggests a much more terrifying prospect: that it is ourselves that pose the true threat.



This is a wide ranging and evaluative essay which is particularly good at using and analysing short, embedded quotations. Relevant terminology is used, but the candidate always considers the meanings of the author's choices after labelling them. Comparisons are made through genre, theme, narrative perspective, structure, use of verisimilitude, use of the other. Although this candidate does sometime evaluate the success of the writers (for which they are not awarded marks), elsewhere there is more relevant evaluation, for example examining the significance of the novels to modern audiences in the conclusion, and the final evaluative comparison between the external and internal threats in each novel.



Short quotations which are embedded into your essay can be used to give a very focused analysis of exactly what the writers were trying to convey. Make sure that after identifying the technique being used you consider the deeper meanings of your quotes.

This extract from an essay on *Frankenstein* and *The Handmaid's Tale* was awarded marks in level 4.

In 'Frankenstein' a sense of threat is vital to the gothical ~~the~~ atmosphere of horror which Shelley attempts to create. This sense of threat is generated through Shelley's craft of literary techniques such as pathetic fallacy, a ~~device~~

trope commonly associated with the gothic horror genre, <sup>to</sup> which Frankenstein certainly belongs. Shelley makes use of pathetic fallacy throughout the novel, however it is arguably most effective when used ~~as~~ as a backdrop for the creation of the creature. For example, ~~the~~ Mary ~~Shelley~~ chooses to begin chapter five with a description of the weather and time of year, being "a dreary night of November." This is ~~not~~ ~~only~~ structurally significant, as it ~~suggests that~~ builds a sense of threat at the very start of the chapter, no doubt with the intent of ~~perpetuating~~ foreshadowing what is to come. Both the ~~adjective~~ setting of "November" and adjective "dreary" combine to create an almost stereotypical gothic setting; being a dark night during mid-winter, the ~~set~~ setting creates a ~~sense~~ definite sense of threat due to its ~~close~~ strong connotations of the supernatural, which Shelley's ~~audience~~ contemporary audience had come to associate with unsettling, disastrous events. ~~Therefore, it~~ ~~can be said that Mary Shelley creates a~~ ~~It could~~ ~~also~~ also be argued that this sense of threat, created by the use of pathetic fallacy, is perpetrated ~~between~~ ~~the~~ by the ~~contrast~~ oxymoronic contrast between

The setting of Geneva, Switzerland, and ~~Ingolstadt~~ Ingolstadt. The influence of the Romantic Movement on Mary Shelley, as an ~~author~~ author writing during the height of ~~the~~ Romantic ideals in literature, is shown here. The picturesque ~~the~~ setting of Geneva is reminiscent of ~~the~~ sublime aspects of the Romantic movement, ~~however~~ and contrasts strongly with the ~~dark~~ dark atmosphere of ~~the~~ the city, ~~therefore~~ ~~is~~ strengthening the sense of dread created by the setting. Therefore, it can be seen that Mary Shelley makes use of literary techniques such as pathetic fallacy and changes in setting to reinforce the sense of dread she so clearly wishes for her audience to ~~the~~ experience, and in doing so, shows ~~the~~ the influence of Romanticism ~~as~~ ~~well~~ combined with classic gothic horror on her writing.

Where Shelley aims to evoke ~~horror~~ tension in ~~the~~ her creation of a sense of threat, Atwood aims to emphasise the dystopian nature of Gilkad, through generating a threatening atmosphere of ~~the~~ oppression and isolation. ~~The~~ ~~same~~ The sense of threat in ~~the~~ 'The Handmaid's Tale' is far more subtle than



that of 'Frankenstein', due to the fact that it is derived from the oppressive nature of Gileadean society. For example, in the totalitarian society of Gilead, there is no such thing as free speech. This is what makes Offred's discovery of the words "nolle te barbares carborundum" so significant; although she is unable to understand the true meaning, 'don't let the barbares grind you down', it becomes a symbol of hope and rebellion due to its mere existence. The fact that these words were written in Latin served to emphasize the sense of secrecy ~~and~~ present among the handmaids, therefore emphasizing the oppressive character of the Gileadean hierarchy, thus reflecting ~~the~~ Atwood's intended sense of threat. It is also important to highlight the fact that Atwood intended for 'The Handmaid's Tale' to serve as a ~~war~~ warning to ~~the~~ 1980s America; ~~she~~ by creating such ~~a~~ a threatening atmosphere in her dystopian novel, she ~~aimed~~ aimed to highlight the notion that the ~~most~~ mistakes of the past can always be repeated. The setting of Massachusetts is representative of this, as it was the heart of puritanism in America, and in Atwood's discussion of this, she is relating the threats of her

time to the society of classed, thus explaining the reasoning behind her creation of a sense of threat.



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Examiner Comments

This is a good example of how a short quote (one which was used in many essays) can be analysed and developed successfully. The 'dreary night in November' is linked to the gothic genre and to contemporary audience responses and the influence of Romanticism, before going on to compare the use of settings in the two texts.



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Examiner Tip

Make sure you use quotes which are appropriate to the question; don't use the same quotes for every essay question you answer, as they won't always be suitable.

## Question 8

'A range of locations'

There were many interesting and sound responses to this question, with stronger candidates considering how location impacted not only on the plot and character but also on the wider themes within the novels. *Frankenstein* and *The Handmaid's Tale* was the most common combination of texts used for this question, with many making relevant comparisons between the wide open spaces and closeted atmospheres, and the use of real and fictional locations.

Weaker responses strayed into writing about setting rather than location and with many analysing the writer's use of pathetic fallacy with no reference to location or place. Due to the question specifying a *range* of locations, some answers were unable to access the higher levels of the mark scheme because they focused on one key location and therefore did not fully develop an argument. Stronger candidates were able to connect the use of locations to contextual factors and consider how locations can have symbolic relevance as well as literal significance for characters.

Many answers focused on the ways in which writers contrast locations within their texts and the significance of the movement of characters between different locations. There were some interesting arguments about the use of location to present the boundaries faced by characters, or to represent different stages in characters' lives; for example the use of Hailsham and the Cottages to symbolise the clones' development from childhood to adolescence, or Frankenstein's 'workshop of filthy creation' in Ingolstadt and the ways in which location can be used to represent a character's state of mind. The language used to describe locations and give them significance was rarely considered, so AO2 analysis was often underdeveloped for this question. Most responses considered how locations linked to context, especially contemporary debates about science, colonisation, cloning, fin de siècle insecurities.

Many responses tended to focus upon the themes of secrecy and of isolation. Secrecy was seen to be surrounding clones and their removal from society in *Never Let Me Go*, revealed in the way Kathy is unable to find Hailsham when driving round. Secrecy was also seen as a feature of Victor's laboratory and Nick's room. Isolation was seen to bring about a sense of fear for example the creature's isolation in the mountains and Offred's isolation in spite of being surrounded by people (any of whom could be 'eyes'). Some candidates were less successful in attempting to link these themes to specific locations, suggesting the use of pre-rehearsed material. This was rarely successful, and candidates would be better served by applying their knowledge of the texts afresh when tackling a new question.

This essay on *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Frankenstein* was placed on the border between levels 4 and 5.

**Please write the titles of your chosen texts below:**

Text 1:

*The Handmaid's Tale*

Text 2:

*Frankenstein*

Both authors, Atwood and Shelley, use locations by attributing symbolic meaning to them which epitomises the greater, overriding themes of their respective novels. Not only do both authors use locations to symbolise ~~longs~~ the transgression of social and moral boundaries, but also as places of hope, coding the locations of the two novels as just as complex as the characters who inhabit them.

Arguably, the most significant use of locations by both authors are as symbols of transgression.

This is evident in the Handmaid's Tale, not only when Ofged catches the Commander "invading" her room\* (with such a lexical choice clearly holding connotations of ~~subversive~~ subversive activity) but also in the Commander's office which is "an oasis of the gorbidden". While <sup>As</sup> the ~~are~~ polysyndetic listing of "books and books and books" in the office highlight the extent emphasises the extent of the Commander's power in Gilead, the office itself, ~~is~~ becomes symbolic of his position of significance in the regime as it is where the Commander explains the justification of ~~the~~ Gilead as "better never means better to everyone". However, such power in a ~~religious~~ theocratic regime codes the Commander as the perpetrator of transgression as the "scriptural precedent" that the regime is based upon is subverted in his office. As he and Ofged play scrabble there,

Oggel describes it as an "eyeblick" of "greedom", which Atwood could have intended as paronomasia to play on the motif of the "Eyes", the pervasive repressive force of Gilead. The way in which the guardian's office is unsupervised is due to the "blit" of the "~~eyes~~" "Eyes" as the Commander's motives are "beyond reproach" as and therefore he is exempt from punishment due to his position in Gilead and therefore he is able to transgress through acts that are "kinky in the extreme". This abuse of religious authority creates a sense of antinomianism that is associated with the transgressive Commander's office which evokes the rhetoric of Ronald Reagan and the New Right in the 1980s. The US President once said, "without God, democracy cannot and will not long endure" and it is this ~~man~~ subversion of Biblical precedent, particularly through the

naming of the brothel as a biblical location with the name of Jezebel, that the Commander is allowed to manipulate due to his position at "the top", "the very top" of Gilead, with Atwood's use of epistole or top used to criticize the Commander's abuse of political and religious authority in his office. In Frankenstein, Shelley uses locations to represent the act of transgression, however unlike Atwood, who used a location that was at the center of Gilead, Shelley uses remote locations to ~~show~~ show transgression. Victor confesses that "neither the structure of languages, nor the code of governments, nor the politics of various states" ~~is~~ appealed to him, reflecting his choice of location in the subversive act of ~~transgression~~ creating the creature as his rejection of societal concepts reflects his transgression of societal ~~is~~ boundaries. For example,

he chooses to construct the second creature in "some remote part of Scotland" which, in his isolation, allows him to transgress societal restrictions. Shelley may have used this to evoke fears and anxieties of the zeitgeist surrounding revolution and as the 'mob' population of Paris was crucial in overthrowing the establishment in 1789 and these were growing fears that for the loss of self involved in participating in a mob would lead to the loss of morals that would usually apply to an individual. Therefore, Victor in his travelling to a "remote" place loses his own self and morals in the same way that revolutionaries of the era did. Shelley may use Walton's transgression to further highlight this as despite declaring that he "shall kill no albatross", an allusion to the Kine of the Ancient Mariner which suggests that Walton will learn from Victor's narrative, his



expedition to remote areas of "yost and desolation" lead to him being possessed by the same hubris that permeated Victor's undertaking as Walton laments his lost Lopes "of utility and glory". Therefore, Shelley criticises man's ability to learn from the failures of transgression in a similar way to Atwood, who compares "Iran and Gilead" as "monotheisms". Given that the Iranian Revolution, ~~had taken~~ when Ruhollah Khomeini exploited socio-economic grievances to push his religious agenda, took place in 1979, Atwood is clearly comparing the locations of Iran and North America to show the dangers in not learning from other events elsewhere in the world by following Keegan's rhetoric that declared that "within the Bible are the answers to all the problems men face." Therefore, while Atwood uses ~~a~~ well-known central locations while

Shelley uses remote locations such as Scotland and the North Pole, both use locations to show the dangers of transgression and failing to learn from it.

However, Atwood and Shelley use locations differently, as far as the homes of the protagonists are concerned. ~~to~~ Shelley categorises Victor's home of Geneva as one of violence as the location was, ~~also~~ for the Romantics especially, the home of Jean-Jacques Rousseau whose writings contributed to the French revolution and therefore by locating ~~the~~ William's murder at "Plainpalais" (near Geneva), Shelley clearly equates the monster's actions to revolutionary bloodshed. ~~This is also~~ On the other hand, Atwood codes Oxyed home (at least in Gilead) as a place of peace in the Night sections of the novel when she goes to "lie".

in her room. While being conveyed to her room, Atwood's use of analepsis shows the comfort that Oogred takes from her reflection as the hypophora of "where should I go? Somewhere good" highlights how she is free to explore her better memories and interior thoughts in the safety of her room.

Given the use of the Sufi epigraph, Atwood may have been using such sections to draw parallels to Sufi mysticism which focussed more on interiority and private mystical union with God rather than any prescribed theological responses to Islam. This draws parallels with Oogred as ~~the~~ her personal spirituality ~~is~~ is centred around the Cushion that says "faith" in her room, it rather than the religion forced on her by Gilad. Sufi practitioners focussed on

integrity at the expense of any social or political action in a similar way to Ooged therefore, while Shelley uses the home of the protagonist as a symbol for political change, Atwood uses it to show political inaction and instead personal guilt.

Overall, locations are used to symbolise transgression in both novels, while Atwood focuses on Gilead as a place of a lack of political action yet Shelley centres Geneva around revolutionary activity.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This candidate excels at making detailed comparisons throughout the essay, and is very good at integrating relevant contextual points into their answer.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Make sure your contextual points are linked to the rest of your argument, not set apart from it.

This essay on *Frankenstein* and *Never Let Me Go* was given a mark in level 3.

**Please write the titles of your chosen texts below:**

Text 1:

Frankenstein, Mary Shelley

Text 2:

Never Let Me Go, Kazuo Ishiguro

In *Frankenstein* and *Never Let Me Go*, ~~the~~ Shelley and Ishiguro use a range of locations to present feelings such as loneliness and fear, as well as foreshadowing the fates of the characters.

Shelley and Ishiguro both use locations to create a sense of isolation for Victor Frankenstein and the clones. In *Frankenstein*, Victor ~~describes~~ asks "where had they fled?" when the next morning I awoke?" when referring to the mountains, pine woods, and the ~~egg~~ eagle he saw, which he claimed ~~gave~~ brought him peace. Instead, "the rain was pouring in torrents, and ~~thick~~ thick mists hid the summits of the mountains... those mighty friends." Victor ~~was~~ already feels isolated from his family as a result of his monsters' actions, but now he doesn't even feel connected to nature. It is ironic that Victor would call the mountains his

"mighty friends" considering he already ~~did~~ went against nature by creating a living being in an unnatural way. In this scene, nature is portrayed as abandoning Victor, as mist hid the mountains from him. In a way, it appears that nature is punishing Victor for going against it, by ~~the~~ hiding the things that comforted him. The heavy rain also adds to the sense of isolation, as the sound would drown out any other noises, and ~~the~~ would make it harder to see, clouding ~~his~~ his senses and making him feel alone with himself. Shelley may have used this location to show the effects of disobeying nature's laws, as well as showing what too much knowledge can do to you. ~~the~~ Victor meets his monster again in this location where Victor feels isolated, and ~~it~~ may be showing how too much knowledge can drag you away from the rest of the world, ~~in the same way~~ as Victor's creation has done so.\* Similarly, Ishiguro uses location to present loneliness in *Never Let Me Go*. Kathy describes the cottages as "the remains of a farm ~~there~~... all converted for us to live in... there were other buildings... most were virtually falling down." Having the clones live in the remains of a farm shows a lack of care from the rest of society, as it suggests the clones are not regarded as humans. It also shows they ~~don't~~ want to get like the clones don't exist by putting them somewhere like a farm, as farms tend to be far away from the rest of the population. The clones being in the remains of a farm also

links them to animals, as both the clones and animals are created to provide humans with things we claim we need. This further shows their isolation as they are treated like animals, having no connection to the outside world. ~~Moreover,~~ ~~in~~ Ishiguro may be highlighting the lack of care we show towards animals for example, using them in ~~experiments~~ testing products or treating them inhumanely for fossil, while trying to act as if it isn't happening. Moreover, both Shelley and Ishiguro use locations to show a feeling of isolation.

Both writers also use locations to foreshadow what happens to their characters. In Frankenstein, ~~Shelley~~ Victor experiences a thunderstorm ~~at~~ ~~at~~ at 15, and watched its progress with "curiosity and delight." This is the first sign of Victor's later quest for knowledge, as he is fascinated by the lightning and immediately finds out more about it. This shows us Victor's curious nature and desire for more knowledge, which is on a greater scale further on in the book. It also shows the kind of knowledge he will pursue - dangerous, powerful, and god-like. Shelley shows us how one event led to Victor's greed for power and knowledge, as ~~if~~ he watched what nature could do, wondering how he could do the same. Foreshadowing fate is also shown in Never Let Me Go, although slightly differently.

Kenny describes her location where ~~she~~ she goes with Tommy and Rum with "ghostly dead trunks poking out of the soil, most of them broken off only a few feet up." Here, the state of the trees are representing the fate of clones - after being harvested for their ~~own~~ organs, all that will be left is a shell of them, not quite all there, abandoned. It also represents how early into their lives their lives end, as the trees broke off "only a few feet up." Ishiguro shows us in nature, how the clones will end up, although we already know by this point. He may be showing how, despite the ~~research~~ unnatural way in which they were created the clones ~~are~~ have connections with nature. This also shows the dangerous ability of humans, as we are able to create things ~~and~~ so unnatural but they become as normal as nature. Therefore, both Shelley and Ishiguro use locations in order to foreshadow what happens later on.

Locations are also used to create a sense of fear in the characters. In ~~the text~~ ~~the~~ Frankenstein, gothic scenery is used in the location of Victor's home at his university. ~~Shelley~~ Shelley describes "rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my ~~the~~ candle was nearly burnt out." This creates a sense of fear because it creates suspense, as the only light is about to ~~be~~ go out, leaving Victor alone in the dark where the unknown



works. The rain pattering against the windows also shows how nature is trying to get in but can't, showing he can't be saved from his creation.

\* At the time Frankenstein was written, knowledge had expanded a lot, and Shelley may be showing how new knowledge gave people too much confidence and a desire to hold the most.



This candidate has made a common mistake which was seen when answering this question because they did not focus sufficiently on specific locations. The candidate occasionally drifts into discussion of isolation and weather without linking them particularly to locations. This loss of focus on the question means that while most of what is written is 'clear' (the key descriptor for level 3) it is not 'discriminating' (the descriptor which characterises level 4)



Make sure that every point you make is directly relevant to the exact question that has been asked.

## Question 9

'Use the supernatural to reveal character'

This was a very popular question and was usually well answered. Some candidates clearly struggled to engage with the whole of the task, with most able to explore writers' presentation of the supernatural, but fewer able to identify how the writers used the supernatural *to reveal character*. There was some detailed discussion of ways in which character was revealed and many examples of the supernatural, but these were often not connected. *Dracula* received some interesting discussion, though some candidates found themselves writing more about the count's appearance than anything notably supernatural. In better responses, many writing about *Dracula* were able to focus on the transformation of women by vampirism and the symbolism of this, while those answering on *Beloved* made interesting comments on the effect of the supernatural on Sethe, Denver and Paul D, and used this to explore the impact and legacy of slavery well. Essays using *The Little Stranger* tended to focus on supernatural occurrences rather than how these events revealed character, although there was some thoughtful discussion of the poltergeist as potentially a manifestation of the repressed emotions of Mrs Ayres, Roderick and Faraday.

Some lower level answers appeared to be rather vague about supernatural elements and there was therefore little broadening out into features of writers' craft beyond basic comments on character traits. Higher level answers often explored the ways in which characters responded to the supernatural. There were some very interesting discussions of the supernatural in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in connection with the portrait. Many candidates chose to analyse the language used to describe the 'changed' portrait and on the whole this was done well. In *Dracula*, there was detailed analysis of the presentation of Lucy's change and the sexual nature of her description was an aspect covered by many. The best responses went on to make links to feminism, the 'threat' of the new woman on society and Victorian fin de siècle anxieties.

In this question and question 10, many candidates had an excellent understanding of contextual factors related to genre conventions in Gothic literature. Many contextual comments on the two Victorian texts considered Victorian ideas about physiognomy, aestheticism, the New Woman and fears of invasion and loss of culture. These texts were often compared to good effect. In comparison, contextual points related to *The Little Stranger* were less detailed, and there was some confusion between the time setting of the novel and the time of writing, while those analysing *Beloved* often gave only a brief contextual comment about the effects of slavery with little detail or development.

## Question 10

'Good and evil'

This question resulted in wide-ranging responses, with the top end identifying the inherent difficulty of separating out these two intrinsic aspects of humanity. While the majority of candidates addressed the question asking for the presentation of good and evil to be explored, a few addressed only one of these aspects, while better answers were able to consider the relationship between the two. Most responses took a connective approach to their chosen texts by, for instance, focusing on the ways in which the moral evilness of characters or ideologies was physically manifested, either through the appearance of characters (for example, contrasting Dracula's monstrous appearance with Dorian Gray's aesthetically pleasing outward appearance which allows him to commit his evil acts – a vision of purity hiding the corruption beneath) or the descriptions of location as indicative of moral decay (e.g. Wilde's description of East London, Dracula's Castle, the disintegrating Hundreds Hall). Many candidates chose to refer to the contrasts between characters that embody good, compared to those who represent evil.

*Dracula* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was a popular and successful combination of texts, with some extremely good essays putting forward comparative religious arguments, Freudian interpretations and close language analysis of the physical transformations of the characters. On occasion, *Dracula* tended to be read in rather simplistic moral terms, with only a few candidates taking the chance to consider the moral ambiguity of characters such as Lucy and Renfield. However, this approach did lead to some very impressive analysis of the opposition of good and evil in the characters of Dracula and the group of crusading men, with interesting discussion of religion and Stoker's didactic affirmation of the importance of faith in a rapidly changing world. The good in people was also discussed in the sense of community spirit being able to defeat evil in both *Dracula* (evident when Van Helsing's team donate blood to Lucy and vanquish Dracula) and in *Beloved* (when Denver engages with the community and the women band together to help Sethe and defeat Beloved).

There was often sophisticated discussion of the blurred boundaries between good and evil with regard to Sethe's infanticide, with several commenting that in the context of the brutality of slavery readers would find it hard to condemn a supposedly 'evil' action. There was also much nuanced contextual discussion of Morrison's post-colonial concern with giving voice to the disenfranchised and the importance of facing up to the legacy of slavery.

Waters tended to be read in rather reductive terms, attempting to label individual characters as evil rather than thinking about the specific instances of the evil present in Hundreds Hall. Faraday and the Ayres family were frequently labelled as evil with little supporting evidence or nuance (many tried to use Faraday's childhood act of vandalism as evidence of his evil nature, with limited success). Better answers focused on the malign presence of the poltergeist, or the moral ambiguity of the characters, while one candidate thoughtfully considered the foundation as the NHS as a force for good in the face of the evils of war and class hierarchy.

This essay on *Beloved* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was given full marks.

Please write the titles of your chosen texts below:

Text 1:

*The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Text 2:

*Beloved*

In Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Morrison's *Beloved*, both authors employ subverted Gothic tropes in contrast with the respective contemporary cultural moralities to present good and evil. As 'Gothic novels,' as Fred Botting remarks, 'frequently use a cautionary strategy, to warn against social and moral transgression by presenting them in their most threatening forms.' Both novels reveal transgression, crucially in the central acts of murder — Sethe's infanticide and Dorian's homicide of Basil — in order to evoke the hypocrisy of the morality of both the Antebellum South and of Victorian London.

The ~~the~~ structural fulcrum point of Wilde's only novel is the murder of Basil in the upstairs

schoolroom, after which point the novel fully embraces the genre conventions of the 'Gothic serial' as Dorian utilises sin as a new 'mode of expression'. Wilde ~~expresses that~~ <sup>expresses</sup> Dorian's rejection of the Christian morality of Victorian England in favour of the amorphous Greek philosophy espoused by his mentor, Lord Henry, in his rejection of Basil's plea for repentance: 'there is still time ... "Though your sins be red as scarlet, I will make them white as snow."' Basil's Wilde's allusion to the prophet ~~Isaiah~~ <sup>Isaiah</sup> and to Christ, who paraphrases this divine promise, accords, seemingly, with Dorian and Henry's ~~desire~~ <sup>elation</sup> of beauty. However, Dorian appears to have rejected beauty as a moral ideal — as symbolised by his brutal stabbing of 'the painter' — in favour of 'desire': the new ideal of Henry's 'new Hedonism'. However, Wilde, who although an aesthete was also a Christian (who converted to Rome on his deathbed), warns against this conception of good and evil, in accordance with Boling's interpretation. In his *De Populidis*, Wilde wrote of the 'Hellenistic ideal' which Dorian indulges and abuses: 'desire, in the end, was a melody, or a madness, or both.' Thus, Wilde admonishes readers against Dorian and Henry's religion of desire for its consequences are damning. The Gothic trope of transgression is conveyed

in conjunction with that of idolatry, which is also the greatest mortal sin — as it defames God — that man can commit under a Christian conception. As Dorian descends in to depravity, as the pathetic fallacy of the Dickensian East End of London suggests (itself a metaphor for the 'two-faced' hypocrisy of the supposedly moral High Victorian London of the fin de siècle): 'the moon hung low in the sky like a yellow skull'. Like when he idolised and worshipped Sybil Vane for her beauty — 'He thought only of Sybil. A faint echo of love came back to him. He repeated her name over and over again.' (Chapter Seven) — Dorian again repeats his idolatrous mantra: 'To cure the soul means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul!' This idolatry of the physical, the 'flesh', is also ~~also~~ conveyed in *Beloved*, although Morrison's exploration of how the (im)morality of slavery and the Southern Gothic intersect with the evangelical Christian notions of good and evil is more complicated.

The characters in *Beloved* often engage in impromptu prayer, implying their implicit belief in a God who is potent and active in the world. The open-air preacher Baby Suggs declares: 'God take what he want', she said, 'and He take, and He take, and He take.' <sup>or</sup> Morrison's use of epimone conveys the notion of an angry or

demanding God against which Baby Suggs is expressing resentment and frustration for the suffering inflicted by slavery upon her. However, Baby Suggs enjoins those ex-slaves who listened to her in the woods to 'love your flesh. Yonder they don't love your flesh.' In contrast to Dorian Gray's hedonism, Baby Suggs commands her fellow 'colored people,' whose 'flesh' is regarded by slaveholders such as Schoolteacher as not 'worth its weight in coin', to ~~deny~~ <sup>refuse</sup> that sacrifice. Yet after ~~the~~ she witnesses the infanticide which her daughter-in-law attempts, ~~and~~ <sup>simply</sup> ~~by the way~~ ~~one more time~~ ~~against~~ <sup>simply</sup> which was prompted by the arrival of the 'four horsemen,' 'schoolteacher, one rephew, one slave catcher and a sheriff,' which in Christian eschatology ironically heralds the End Time and the Last Judgement, Baby Suggs can not bring herself to judge Sethe for rejecting her injunction to love her children's 'flesh'. The loss of faith implied by the metaphor Morrison uses of Baby Suggs, who 'didn't even rise her hand ... but got into bed and stayed there,' is the consequence of the mechanism of slavery, which tried to dehumanise its sufferers. That Sethe could 'simply swing the baby one more ~~to~~ ~~against~~ ~~the~~ towards the wall plank,' in a seemingly effortless movement - as ~~my~~ implied by Morrison's use of simile - conveys the horrid moral invasion that slavery has caused: the most transgressive and evil act conceivable is actually viewed,

partly justifiably as good, or at least neutral (by Baby Suggs). Thus, the context of slavery, which systematically undermined and neglected the rights and identity of the slaves has, implies Morrison, as had the same impact on ~~Christian~~ on good and evil, such was the hypocrisy of the slave-owning classes.

The Gothic trope of hauntings ~~was~~ also is employed by Morrison to complicate the reader's understanding and ~~sympathy~~ <sup>pathos</sup> for the effect Selbe and the other four slave characters. 124, which itself is a character personified by the opening line of the book, '124 is was spiteful' engages another Gothic convention, of setting acting as character, to metaphorically convey the psychological effect on Selbe and Paul D. The supernatural is, as in *Dorian Gray*, effectively ~~was~~ used to suggest the spiritual impact of good and evil.

Ultimately, both *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Beloved* utilise and subvert Gothic conventions to express the ~~new~~ good and evil aspects of their protagonists. Wilde demonstrates supreme depravity to highlight the truth of Christian morality in opposition to Hedonism through the use transgressive acts, murder and idolatry. Morrison opposes similar actions but undermines the ~~a~~ faith in Christian morality by having slavery and its effects distort what appears good or evil.





This is an essay demonstrating impressive contextual understanding. Particularly for *The Picture of Dorian Gray* there are quite subtle points made (for example about Wilde's aestheticism and religious views). The candidate successfully evaluates the impact of the two texts when considering the writers' purposes.

## Question 11

'Journeys'

Essays explored both physical and metaphorical journeys in their answer to this question, with several candidates exploring characters' developmental journeys and maturation from childhood to adulthood, while others chose to focus on female characters' journeys and how the writers made use of the different settings to reflect emotional growth. There was often a useful focus on narrative structure which meant that AO2 was usually thoroughly addressed. The best responses evaluated the extent to which physical journeys could link to and provide parallels with the narrative arc for specific characters. Some of the best comparisons made perceptive connections by evaluating the challenges faced by women during the different time periods covered by their choice of novels.

Some candidates struggled to make relevant contextual comments which tied in to the overall argument being made. There was a tendency for contexts to be added in separate paragraphs or at the end of a paragraph with relevance to the question not always readily apparent. There also seemed to be some confusion about the time setting of *Wuthering Heights*, which while written in the Victorian period narrates events taking place primarily in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Weaker answers tended to generalise about the position of women 'in the 1800s', which was a particular problem for candidates comparing the two 19<sup>th</sup> Century texts. Better candidates discussed the legal and social changes that had occurred between writing of *Wuthering Heights* and *Tess* (such as the right to inherit and own property, the right to education). There was also some very good discussion of genre for example the use of Gothic conventions in *Wuthering Heights*, and of Hardy's didactic purpose.

*Mrs Dalloway* was the least popular text, however some very impressive work was seen on this novel, with examiners noting very close textual analysis which led to high performance in AO2, although there was some vagueness when writing about contexts. Although *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was usually written about with a great deal of success, in weaker responses there was a tendency to lack textual support, or to select quotations which had limited relevance to the question of journeys (such as the scene where Rasheed makes Mariam chew pebbles, which was very rarely analysed with reference to the question).

This essay on *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Wuthering Heights* was awarded a level 3 mark.

**Please write the titles of your chosen texts below:**

Text 1:

*Wuthering Heights*

Text 2:

*A Thousand Splendid Suns*

In the novels "Wuthering Heights" and "A Thousand Splendid Suns,"

both Brontë and Hosseini portray the domestic lives of marginalised

characters to tell a story, as ~~the~~ the novels begin with the characters

being ostracised by society and ends with the characters gaining

value for themselves. Storytelling is used by both writers

to encapsulate the sympathy of the audience when looking at

the interior lives of victimised characters with no voice,

reflecting how people lived if they were victimised in a

victorian or Afghan society.

Ostracised characters such as Heathcliff and Manam are portrayed

to not be loved, gaining them no value in society, as both children

are illegitimate and therefore have no opinions. When Heathcliff

is introduced to the Earnshaw family, he is caught in diabolic

~~be~~ and dark imagery, Brontë using words such as "Devil",

"dark" and "black". The victimisation of Heathcliff further isolates him from society as he is dehumanised only being referred to as "it" or "thing" rather than his actual name. Heathcliff's life is restricted to an identity forced upon him, seeming a "sullen, pensive child; hardened, perhaps to ill-treatment" by the abuse he is constantly inflicted with by Hindley who "cuffed him over the ears", giving Heathcliff "three lashings" making his arm "black as the shoulder". Bronte's introduction of Heathcliff automatically being presented as a burden reflects how Victorian society victimised and ostracised people who do not fit within the status quo, and Heathcliff being an illegitimate orphan, is forced to be restricted within the boundaries of Victorian ideals. Bronte may have included this to criticise the treatment of people who did not fit into society in Victorian era, reflecting the ideals present in 1847 England. The gothic is brought into perspective as Heathcliff is criticised and abused despite attempting to conform to the standards of society. Attempting to be a part of society, Bronte portrays Heathcliff's effort to go to work as he his hair is described to be a "colt's mane" verbs of violent movement and conflict used by Bronte to show the impact of the victimisation on Heathcliff; "ste seized", "dashed", "inscrutably", "fit up passion". This shows that regardless of attempts of conformity, life for marginalised people in Victorian England deemed impossible to live. This is reflected as Heathcliff is not even chosen to get married to Catherine, despite her love for him being like the "eternal rocks beneath" storms and

metaphors are used to describe Catherine's everlasting love for Heathcliff; "whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same." Despite this assurance, Heathcliff's love is diminished as Catherine's reason for picking him is because it would "degrade (her) so many Heathcliffs" and she wishes to be the wealthiest woman of the neighbourhood. This shows that Heathcliff really does not have a value, even in the life of his loved one, as he is always being put aside due to his status and lack of voice. Similarly, Manam who was born illegitimate undergoes the same fate as she is initially introduced to the reader through the label of a <sup>"harami"</sup> "weed" and the symbol of a "weed". As a weed can be "something you rip out and toss aside", Nana indicates that Manam is temporary in setting the life of Jali and therefore has no distinct presence in society. As her own mother degrades Mariam for being a "harami", she is isolated within her own *waliba*, which further removes her from society as the *waliba* is "hidden" from the clutches of society. It was "flanked on either side by knee high grass", as if Manam was a burden to be hidden, an embarrassment of Jali's Indecency which impacts Mariam and makes her a victim of the patriarchal society of Afghanistan. Both Manam and Nana's domestic lives replicate the lives of women and how they are dependent on men's views, as reflected in Nana's statement; "like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman. Always." Repetition of the man's accusing finger always,

foreshadows the implications that is to come in Manam's life, as her victimised, illegitimate life means turning at the hands of a patriarchal society. Hosseini presents her to be isolated to such an extent where even the narrative perspective is not in her voice. Although women are central to Hosseini's novel, and Manam is the focaliser, the book is in third person omniscient narrative, which further isolates Manam as she is forced to undergo the journey by herself and the reader is forced to observe. Manam, like Karam, is also not given a chance to love as she is forced to marry despite Jalil's daughter being of the same age. Hosseini emphasises the impact of education here as Jalil's daughters with "plans to enroll in Kabul university", "Pi fifteen, evidently, was not a good solid marrying age for them." Showing how Manam is forced to live alongside patriarchal views of Afghanistan which favour the legitimate people and crush the illegitimate, further impacting their journey.

Due to the disempowerment and harsh treatment of society, both Manam and Karam are forced to create their own identity, even when criticised by society, allowing them to gain value. Karam's ambiguous return to Krumeng Heights is emphasised by his new demeanor, signifying the beginning of a journey towards value and respect. He is now contrasted with his initial introduction

as he now occupies "a half-civilized fensy (..) with eyes full of black fire" ~~Heathcliff is etc~~ Bronte, like Masseni, also ~~also~~ sheds a light on the advantages of education as it is portrayed to equal power; "it issued intelligent and retained no marks of its former degradation." Even Heathcliff's manner has changed to one which is "dignified", emphasising the impact of his journey as he now being looked at for what he is worth. However, Heathcliff's journey only leads to him having more power as Bronte presents him to be tyrannical and abusive, fulfilling the stereotype of a patriarchal man in Victorian society. His treatment of Isabella highlights the gain in power and value as Heathcliff now has the ability to "paint on it's white (manlyish, waxen face) one course of the rainbow." Poetic licence is used by Bronte to highlight how even Heathcliff's language has changed amongst his journey, the raw brutal language being used to amplify his tyrannical tendencies to "turn the blue eyes black (..) they detestably resemble Unron's". The ultimate form of journey is shown as Catherine ~~wants~~ ends up choosing her love for Heathcliff, despite being at a state of ~~sanity~~ insanity. The Gothic is again used by Bronte to create a dark, non-idealised view on love, which emphasises the hostile relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff, where Catherine "shall not be at peace" whilst Heathcliff "writhes in the torments of hell." Heathcliff states "Don't picture me but I'm as mad as yourself," indicates

how he has finally gained value as now he is worth more than Camerino in terms of wealth and security, and he now holds a voice. This highlights how Heathcliff's journey brings him power and value, which can also be seen in "A Thousand Splendid Suns", as Mariam gains the courage to retaliate against her abusive patriarchal husband. Mariam goes against gender roles as she begins to gain value after fighting and sacrificing herself for her love. Hosseini uses the death of Rasheed to dispel misconceptions around women as Mariam goes against the stereotypical & submissive archetype for an Afghan woman to "decide the course of her own life" for the first time. Hosseini's use of storytelling is evident as a sense of catharsis is brought in when Mariam finally lives according to her own wishes; "And ~~with~~ with that, Mariam brought down one more. This time, she gave it everything she had." As Mariam finally has the ability to choose her own actions and dictate her own life, the title's ultimate sense of journey is conveyed, giving Mariam a value. This value is amplified as Mariam's journey from a weed is contrasted with her "leaving the world as a woman who had loved and been loved back." Juxtapositions and contrasts are used by Hosseini to amplify her ~~the~~ the impact of her journey as she now has "a legitimate end to a life of illegitimate



beginnings." she now leaves the world as a "person of consequence at last" highlighting the impact of a journey and how it can bring value to the lives of those who were outcasted by society.

Bon Bronte and Hosseini emphasise the need for a journey, not just for character development, but to show how a journey can really impact the lives of the outcasted and bring their lives value.

They are given a voice against society, which both Bronte and Hosseini use as a platform to shed light on how the ~~outcasted~~<sup>unmised</sup> still have a value in society, no matter their beginnings. Their lives have consequence.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is a response which would benefit from a more explicit focus on the question of how journeys are used. Although there is a reference to the growth and development of characters in the introduction, the idea of journeys is not really discussed until page 4. The analysis of the writer's craft is very good at times, but unfortunately the candidate cannot be given higher marks because points have not been linked to the question.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Make sure the question is answered.

## Question 12

'Power'

This was the second most popular question on the paper (after question 7) and was answered extremely well, considering characters who wielded power, sought to usurp power or who had power taken away from them. Candidates successfully interpreted power in a variety of ways; naturally for this theme there were many answers focusing on gender and power with the most discerning going beyond the straightforward oppression of women by men in patriarchal societies to consider what power women had in these worlds. Many candidates also explored the power of society on women and explored the consequences of not conforming; for example, Tess being 'ruined' because she is raped; Clarissa possibly being unable to pursue a homosexual relationship and losing her name on marrying; Catherine unable to marry her true love because she wants social status; Mariam and Laila's inability to escape from a violent marriage. Mariam and Tess, several candidates noted, are both executed as a result of resorting to violence in an attempt to stand up to men.

Some students also considered the use of male characters, with one or two perceptive comments on the ways in which society also limits male power in the texts chosen. Most arguments considered how the presentation of power was linked to contexts, especially with regard to gender discrimination and feminist readings of texts. Other approaches included consideration of physical and mental power, political power, the power of religion and of society, and the power of love.

In *Wuthering Heights* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, there was sometimes a slight lack of subtlety in the discussion of women's lack of power, and a tendency to view women as little more than passive recipients of male violence. Better answers considered the power exhibited by characters such as Cathy in exercising her independence, and the complexity of Heathcliff's rise to power.

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* was particularly well discussed, for example when writing about the power dynamics of relationships in the novel. Contexts were usually effectively considered, looking at the importance of setting and how the presence of the Taliban influenced power dynamics. Weaker answers had a tendency to generalise when discussing contexts, and did not always fully grasp the author's intent. Many students commented, for example, on how Hosseini chastised the gender relationship in Afghanistan, but perhaps did not comment on his attempt to celebrate Afghan culture and the underpinning power of females and their ability to endure in the face of severe hardship. It is, after all, their endurance and power which influences the novel's title. Men were sometimes discussed simply as the oppressors of women, ignoring the more liberal values exhibited by characters such as Laila's father, Hakim. There were some very successful comparisons of male violence in Hosseini's and Hardy's novels.

Most responses thoughtfully analysed the writers' use of language to present power. There were some quotations which were used very frequently (for example Cathy's assertion that 'It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff and Hosseini's description of Rasheed forcing Mariam to chew pebbles). While these were usually relevant to the topic of power, candidates are reminded of the necessity to analyse the writer's craft fully, which was sometimes left undeveloped. Where these quotations were the only ones used, candidates were not really able to show their knowledge of the whole texts.

Connections between texts were particularly well made for this question; some found parallels in particularly episodes (e.g. the rape scenes in *Tess* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*) and used these as a means to analyse wider aspects of patriarchy.

This essay on *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was given marks at the lower end of level 4.

Both Hardy and Hosseini present power through emphasising the patriarchal societies that each of their novels are set in. In 'A Thousand Splendid Suns', the amount of power awarded to males in the Afghanistani society is clear through individual characters, such as Rasheed, but also by the limitations put on women, especially under the Taliban Rule. Similarly, male superiority and power is shown in 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' as women in Victorian society are condemned for their 'impure' actions while men continue to be accepted by society. However, both authors allow the female protagonist to reclaim some power by overcoming their abusers.

In both novels, men are portrayed to have more power and influence within their societies. In 'Splendid Suns', women are oppressed throughout the novel but specifically when the Taliban inflicted a set of laws which were mainly targeted at women. They were instructed to 'stay inside at all times' with punishments including being 'beaten and sent home' if they wandered the streets unaccompanied by a man. The quantifier 'all' emphasises the limitations placed on women by male authority as they were expected to always be in their homes. Additionally the brutality associated with the verb 'beaten' shows the lack of respect towards women as they were threatened with assault. The lack of powers women had in the patriarchal society in Afghanistan is made more apparent in this incident due to the fact that there was a section of rules dedicated specifically to them as the announcement stated 'Attention

women:' before proceeding to list all the luxuries that were forbidden. Similarly in 'Tess', the power of men was prominent in society as women did not have the same liberties as men. The double standards in Victorian society ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> evident in the novel through the reactions to premarital sex that Tess faced versus the reactions to Angel committing the same 'crime': when Angel admits to having an affair with a woman in London, he faces no repercussions and no judgement from Tess whereas he expresses distaste when Tess confesses about her incident with Alec. Angel says to Tess, 'Here was I thinking you a new-sprung child of nature; there were you, the exhausted seedling.' The juxtaposition of 'new-sprung' and 'exhausted' shows the high importance placed on female purity as the verb 'exhausted' implies that since she was not a virgin, she was worn out and useless.

The fact that Angel expected Tess to be a paragon of virtue and refused to accept her when he discovered otherwise shows the impractical ~~stress~~ <sup>expectations</sup> that men had of women in Victorian society. Like the women in 'Splendid Suns', Tess had limitations as a woman in ~~her~~ her society as although she did not have specific laws prohibiting her, she was still expected to behave in a certain way.

Furthermore, ~~Hardy~~ <sup>Hardy</sup> and Hosseini show that individual men have power over women in their relationships as both female protagonists were sexually violated. However, both authors allow the females to assert power over their sexual oppressors ~~by~~ permanently. In 'Splendid Suns', Mariam manages to overcome

Rasheed who sexually assaulted her and physically assaulted both her and Laila. While Rasheed was attacking Laila, Mariam killed him with a shovel and in doing so it occurred to [Mariam] that this was the first time that she was deciding the course of her ~~own~~ <sup>own</sup> life. The italicization of the pronoun 'she' emphasises her power in this moment as she finally was able to make a decision for herself that would better her loved ones. Like Mariam, Tess murders her rapist to reclaim power. While killing Alec, Tess stated that he 'made [her] a victim, a caged bird'. The phrase 'caged bird' implies that Tess felt trapped and confined so her act of killing him freed her. This motive appears to be similar to Mariam's as both women wanted to reclaim the power that was taken from them.

Both authors, also, express the theme of power through the power of reputation. In 'Splendid Sons', Mariam was labelled as a 'harami' as she was born out of wedlock, this caused people to have less respect for her as she was addressed as a 'loathsome harami' and was left by her father to sleep outside 'like a dog'. This dehumanising simile shows the power reputation has as her own father was ashamed of her. Similarly, in 'Tess', Tess is labelled with the title 'Fallen Woman' which causes her to be ostracized by society, including the church and her family to an extent. In both novels the person with the tarnished reputation was given their title by no fault of their own.



This candidate develops their argument well; they begin by discussing the power men have over women and comparing the patriarchal societies in which the novels are set, then considers the ways in which women regain power over men through violence, and finally the power of reputation over a woman's prospects. The structure is clear and allows for all of the assessment objectives to be met in every section of the essay.



Think about the structure of your essay before you start writing so that your ideas come across clearly to the reader.

The assessment objectives are not separate; you should try to weave them together as you write your essay rather than having separate sections on context and language.

## Paper Summary

Based on their performance in this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- At the beginning of the examination, write a short plan. Practise doing this quickly so that you still have plenty of time to write your answer.
- Use your introduction to define the line of argument you are going to take. The questions are very broad, so narrow them down to make your argument clear.
- Make sure that every point you make is focused on answering the question.
- Make sure you say something about the way the writer has created meanings when you use a quotation: don't just label them with a literary term and then move on.
- Link contextual points to the question; think about how these contextual factors have affected what the author has written.
- Make links and comparisons between your two texts throughout the whole essay.
- Don't rush so much that your handwriting is unreadable.

## Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>





