

# OCR F664 Standardisation Resource for Centres

OCR A2 English Literature

Unit F664: Texts in Time

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# 1 Introduction

This Standardisation Pack is intended for use by teachers in OCR centres preparing candidates for the English Literature unit F664: Texts in Time.

The examples reproduced within this standardisation pack are intended to enable teachers to mark and moderate their candidates work with greater confidence, by providing a benchmark using work from the 2010 January examinations. All spelling and grammatical errors in exemplar work have been reproduced faithfully to better aid an appreciation of the standards at various levels.

The pack should be used in conjunction with the F664 Coursework Marking Guidance, and in conjunction with the advice given by the Principal Moderator for this unit in the Report on the Units for A2 English Literature, both of which are available on the OCR website.

## 2 A2 Unit F664:

### 2.1 Summary of Unit F664

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For this unit, candidates are required to submit an extended essay, 3000 words maximum, in which they are required to make a comparative analysis of three texts. The word count of 3000 does not include titles, footnotes, bibliographies or quotations either from the main or supporting texts.

Candidates are required to cover three texts. This must include **one prose** and **one poetry** text. The third text can be from **any** genre. Texts can be selected from any period and also across periods.

- **One** literary text may be a significant text in translation.
- **One** text may be a work of criticism or cultural commentary.

**NB** - A **drama** text counts as **neither poetry nor prose**, and is considered a third genre in its own right regardless of writing style.

## 2.2 Ways of grouping

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Centres and candidates must select texts in groupings that facilitate links or contrasts, in order to develop the ability to explore how texts illuminate and connect with each other, and to respond to a range of literary texts and ways of reading them.

There are different ways of linking texts, for example by movement, by time of writing, the varying forms adopted, the values explored, gender or theme.

Some examples of grouping texts are:

### **Genres**

- Gothic writing
- Travel writing

### **Movements**

- Romanticism
- Modernism

### **Historical periods**

- Victorian ideas and attitudes
- Post-WW2 Britain – 1945 to 1965

### **Ways of writing**

- Satire
- Narrative method
- Tragedy and comedy

### **Cultural perspectives**

- Women and society
- Post-1900 perspectives on America

### **Themes and ideas**

- Nature and the environment
- Men and women, love and marriage

These groupings are flexible rather than inflexible, and different centres and candidates may well find their own approaches to the texts and groupings. It is possible that one text might be examined and discussed in different ways, when it is grouped with other different texts.

All four assessment objectives are tested in this unit. AO1 and AO2 are assessed together (15 marks) and are equally weighted. AO3 and AO4 are assessed together (25 marks) and are equally weighted.

Candidates' writing should respond to a point of view, and demonstrate an awareness of the significance of the form and genre used by the writers.

Candidates should make appropriate use of the conventions of writing in literary studies, including references to quotations and sources.

**NOTE: Texts for either coursework unit must not appear on set texts lists.**

**Candidates must not repeat texts from AS coursework at A2.**

## 2.3 Possible groupings and tasks

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**NB:** All texts and task titles are only suggestions, and not intended to be prescriptive. For detailed advice as to your own potential choices of texts, titles or themes, OCR offer a free Coursework Consultancy service, the forms for which can be found on the specification webpage:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/type/gce/english/lit/documents/index.html>

This service will refer your choices to a senior moderator, who will give advice and guidance on the suitability of text and title choices.

### WOMEN AND SOCIETY

Angela Carter	• <i>Wise Children</i>	PROSE
Carol Ann Duffy	• <i>The World's Wife</i>	POETRY
George Eliot	• <i>The Mill on the Floss</i>	
<i>Other suggested texts:</i>		
Anne Brontë	• <i>The Tenant of Wildfell Hall</i>	
George Eliot	• <i>Middlemarch</i>	
George Gissing	• <i>The Odd Women</i>	
Sylvia Plath	• <i>Selected Poems</i>	
Anne Stevenson	• <i>Selected Poems</i>	
Stevie Smith	• <i>Selected Poems</i>	
Caryl Churchill	• <i>Top Girls</i>	
Margaret Atwood	• <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>	
Henrik Ibsen	• <i>A Doll's House</i>	
Jean Rhys	• <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>	
Maxine Hong Kingston	• <i>The Woman Warrior</i>	

Possible contrasts and comparisons to be made as informed by other readers:

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“A common idea in texts written by women is the celebration of the triumph of the individual over adversity.” Compare and contrast the extent to which this interpretation is relevant to your three chosen texts.

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Compare and contrast your three chosen writers' presentation of the ways their women characters fight against the constrictions that society places upon them.

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“To read texts by women written over the course of a hundred years or more is to acknowledge the shifting balance of power as women gain control over their own lives.” Compare and contrast ways in which your three chosen texts either support or challenge this statement.

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## POST-WW2 BRITAIN – 1945 TO 1965

Iris Murdoch	• <i>The Bell</i>	PROSE
Philip Larkin	• <i>The Whitsun Weddings</i>	POETRY
John Osborne	• <i>Look Back in Anger</i>	
<i>Other suggested texts:</i>		
Kingsley Amis	• <i>Lucky Jim</i>	
W H Auden	• <i>The Age of Anxiety</i>	
L P Hartley	• <i>The Go-Between</i>	
Elizabeth Jennings	• <i>Poems</i>	
Doris Lessing	• <i>The Golden Notebook</i>	
Harold Pinter	• <i>The Caretaker</i>	
Alan Sillitoe	• <i>Saturday Night and Sunday Morning</i>	
Muriel Spark	• <i>The Girls of Slender Means</i>	
Dylan Thomas	• <i>Poems</i>	
Evelyn Waugh	• <i>Brideshead Revisited</i>	
Angus Wilson	• <i>Anglo Saxon Attitudes</i>	

Possible contrasts and comparisons to be made as informed by other readers:

“Many post-World War II writers were concerned with making sense of a rapidly changing world.” Compare and contrast ways in which your three chosen writers present a ‘changing world’.

“Post-World War II Britain was still bound by a rigid class system which restricted the freedom of individuals within it.” Compare and contrast your three texts in the light of this view, exploring how they support or challenge this view.

“The alienation of the individual is a key theme in writing of the post-World War II period.” Compare and contrast ways in which your three chosen writers have explored this idea.

**For more thematic and grouping suggestions, please see the Coursework Guidance document, also on the OCR website.**

# 3 Coursework Assessment Criteria for A2

## Unit F664: *Texts in Time*

### 3.1 – AO1 and AO2 (15 marks)

Band 5 12–15 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excellent and consistently detailed understanding of three texts and task undertaken;</li> <li>• consistently fluent and accurate writing in appropriate register;</li> <li>• critical terminology accurately and consistently used;</li> <li>• well-structured, coherent and detailed argument consistently developed.</li> </ul>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• well-developed and consistently detailed discussion of effects of language, form and structure;</li> <li>• excellent and consistently effective use of analytical methods;</li> <li>• consistently effective use of quotations and references to text, critically addressed, blended into discussion.</li> </ul>
Band 4 9–11 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good understanding of three texts and task undertaken;</li> <li>• good level of coherence and accuracy in writing, in appropriate register;</li> <li>• critical terminology used accurately;</li> <li>• well-structured arguments, with clear line of development.</li> </ul>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developed and good level of detail in discussion of effects of language, form and structure;</li> <li>• good use of analytical methods;</li> <li>• good use of quotations and references to text, generally critically addressed.</li> </ul>
Band 3 6–8 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some competent understanding of three texts and task undertaken;</li> <li>• some clear writing in generally appropriate register;</li> <li>• some appropriate use of critical terminology;</li> <li>• some straightforward arguments competently structured.</li> </ul>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some developed discussion of effects of language, form and structure;</li> <li>• some competent use of analytical methods;</li> <li>• some competent use of illustrative quotations and references to support discussion.</li> </ul>
Band 2 3–5 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited understanding of three texts and main elements of task undertaken;</li> <li>• mostly clear writing, some inconsistencies in register;</li> <li>• limited appropriate use of critical terminology;</li> <li>• limited structured argument evident, lacking development and/or full illustration.</li> </ul>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited discussion of effects of language, form and structure;</li> <li>• limited attempt at using analytical methods;</li> <li>• limited use of quotations/references as illustration.</li> </ul>
Band 1 0–2 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very little or no relevant understanding of three texts and very partial attempt at task undertaken;</li> <li>• very inconsistent writing with persistent serious technical errors, very little or no use of appropriate register;</li> <li>• persistently inaccurate or no use of critical terminology;</li> <li>• undeveloped, very fragmentary discussion.</li> </ul>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very little relevant or no discussion of effects (including dramatic effects) of language, form and structure;</li> <li>• very infrequent commentary; very little or no use of analytical methods;</li> <li>• very few quotations (eg one or two) used (and likely to be incorrect), or no quotations used.</li> </ul>



### 3.2 – AO3 and AO4 (25 marks)

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Band 5 20–25 marks	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excellent and consistently detailed comparative analysis of relationships between three texts;</li> <li>• well-informed and effective exploration of different readings of three texts.</li> </ul>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistently well-developed and consistently detailed understanding of the significance and influence of contexts in which literary texts are written and understood as appropriate to the task undertaken.</li> </ul>
Band 4 15–19 marks	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good, clear comparative discussion of relationships between three texts;</li> <li>• good level of recognition of different readings of three texts.</li> </ul>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good, clear evaluation of the significance and influence of contexts in which literary texts are written and understood as appropriate to the task undertaken.</li> </ul>
Band 3 10–14 marks	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some competent comparative discussion of relationships between three texts;</li> <li>• answer informed by some reference to different readings of three texts.</li> </ul>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some competent understanding of the significance and influence of contexts in which literary texts are written and understood, as appropriate to the task undertaken.</li> </ul>
Band 2 5–9 marks	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited attempt to develop comparative discussion of relationships between three texts;</li> <li>• limited awareness of different readings of texts.</li> </ul>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited understanding of the significance and influence of contexts in which literary texts are written and understood as appropriate to the task undertaken.</li> </ul>
Band 1 0–4 marks	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very little or no relevant comparative discussion of relationships between the three texts;</li> <li>• very little or no relevant awareness of different readings of texts.</li> </ul>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very little reference to (and likely to be irrelevant) or no understanding of the significance and influence of contexts in which literary texts are written and understood, as appropriate to the question.</li> </ul>

**Compare and contrast ways in which your three chosen writers explore the individual's quest for meaning and purpose in an increasingly uncertain world.**

- **Alice Walker: *The Color Purple***
- **J.D. Salinger: *The Catcher in the Rye***
- **Maya Angelou: *The Complete Collected Poems***

An individual's quest for meaning and purpose is often linked to the suppression of freedom - this is shown within the two novels; *The Color Purple* and *The Catcher in the Rye* and strongly linked to the poetry of Maya Angelou. The reason behind the quest of an individual may be based on race and gender – as Walker and Angelou show – or more influenced by youthful troubles shown by Salinger. An "uncertain world" is a judgement constantly surrounding society as there are many blanks to fill; these novels attempt to answer specific questions about this world by displaying a moral message - "The world is changing" (Nettie). Although these three writers are compared, their methods used to put their point across may vary and the messages themselves may not entirely agree.

Isolation is an important factor among these texts, it is difficult to "make it out alone" as Angelou states in the poem *Alone*. This line in context to the poem emphasises the overall meaning - which is being aware that it is no possible to find self-meaning, evident to the title, alone. This strongly links to *The Color Purple* as Celie finds out is the "First time somebody made something and name it after me". They correspond as this is the point in the text where Celie realises she is not on her own and it is possible for her to live life without only knowing "how to survive". Both poet and author have used their texts to signify this importance, as Celie and the persona in the poem are crying out for help in order to find their individuality. This concept ties to *Catcher in the Rye* when Holden asks a random man to "stop on the way and join me for a cocktail...on me" as here we see Holden desperately trying to form a connection with a complete stranger - This is his first attempt to connect with anyone during the novel as he has realised that he is responsible for his own actions. Although, where this differs from the poetry and *The Color Purple* is the reasoning behind for this cry for help. Rather than acting out of lust, anger and possibly hormones like Holden, Celie acts simply in order to "survive" as this is how she has been brought up, from being raped as a child to being abused by Mr. Her actions can be seen as less selfish than that of Holden's as she is only looking for an answer for her own existence, hence the reasoning behind her letters being written to God. Angelou has also recognised this view of isolation within the poem *A Conceit*, she asks to "Give me your hand" Although a simple quote, it can be expanded to show an individual finding themselves will need to "lead and follow".

The image of uncertainty involves itself when the question arises of whom to trust, which in many cases only leaves our siblings, within *The Color Purple* it is inferred that the only person Celie truly trusts until she meets Shug is Nettie, her younger sister. This is very strongly linked to Holden as he "damn near gave my kid sister Phoebe a buzz." Both characters feel it is only their family they can trust, more specifically - their siblings. Holden calling Phoebe mirrors the letters being sent to Nettie by Celie instead of God nearing the end of the novel. Angelou also represents this idea in her poem *The Rock Cries out to Us* as the last few lines include the phrase; "Into your sister's eyes...say simply Very simply with hope Good morning." As this poem addresses the various prejudices within society, it ends by submitting the notion that everyone within society is our brother and sister so we should therefore treat each other as siblings. As children may find it difficult to connect with their parents, evident within *The Color Purple* as Celie never connects with

either parents before their death, it is shown how it is only our brother and/or sister that we may relate to.

Religion is universally important to all three authors and their texts as it may guide an individual character. Within *The Color Purple*, being an epistolary novel, the letters have to have a receiving end, being God in this case. During this time black Americans would have been converted to Christianity and therefore the idea of God being all-knowing is amplified and tied to their day to day life, even when all hope seems to be gone. It was preached to them to give a false idolisation to the "White man upstairs". - Thus giving white Americans a dominant role within society without resistance, despite the religion itself not being prejudice, it had been manipulated by man. As Celie had no one else to seek help from other than her Sister who is presumed dead fairly early in the text, her continuous hope relies upon God - despite even losing her faith for a brief amount of time. Angelou supports this idea by stating "We pray" in the poem *The Detached*, by using this phrase it implies we pray when in doubt, very similar to what Celie does in *The Color Purple*.

However within *Catcher in the Rye* despite constant referrals to Catholicism, Holden's view on religion and God is not very specific. "Relax, no one is making cracks about your God damn religion" - Holden implies he does not like the idea of religion, however with deeper understanding of his character, we can see he is criticising the people within the religion that corrupt it. We know this as Holden is worried he will "join one with all the wrong kind of monks in it" showing he is concerned with the members of the religion who may use it for their own benefit.

Innocence and childhood go hand in hand in preparing an individual for their life and to find their own meaning. From *The Color Purple* we can see how Celie's childhood had made her lose her identity. When her dad says "better shut up and git used to it." We can see from this moment on, it is evident in her letters that this had affected her life dramatically. We know this as Celie literary follows the quote until the end of the novel where she finally speaks out for herself. Within *Catcher in the Rye*, Holden does not show his whole life unlike Celie so it is all based around his youth so we can see in depth how his childhood will form him as a person. As the book is partly formed around his sexual frustration as a teenager, we are able to understand how the events effect him because we are more in touch with his personality. "I was sixteen then, and I'm seventeen now, and sometimes I act like I'm about thirteen." - Holden shows how his age and personality do not align much like Celie. On the other hand, Robert Bennett views Holden as more of an individual rather than a confused teenager as he believes "the novel could indicate that there is something more to Holden than his academic failures and adolescent cynicism: He is perceptive, sensitive, creative, and intelligent in his own way."

In their quest to seek meaning in an uncertain world, characters sometimes resort to lies in order to seek comfort. It is first seen in *The Color Purple* when Celie goes against what she knows to be true by telling Harpo to beat Sofia. Margara Averbach agrees with this view by stating "Celie is so immersed in oppression, she accepts the point of view of Mr, she advises Harpo to beat Sofia." When confronted by Sofia she continues to lie, this is due to the fact that she is attempting to seek comfort out of resentment and shows her jealousy of Sofia for being an independent woman. In *Catcher in the Rye* when Holden states to a stranger "He is in my class" he is obviously lying but simply says this in order to fit in and create conversation. These two ideas are linked as both characters lied out of desperation; however they differ due to the context. Holden lies simply to fit in whereas Celie lies out of envy. We are given the impression that these characters are on their last legs of hope as they are resorting to deceit, which for someone like Holden, may come more naturally.

Sex and gender is vitally important to all three authors as the majority of their texts revolve around the subject. *The Color Purple* is partly based around Celie's confusion in her sexuality. " Celie is described by Shug as a "virgin". This is because she has not expressed her sexuality fully despite being around thirty at this point. This strongly links to Angelou who says she can "curl my lips", I'm a woman" in poem *Phenomenal Women*, here she is stating she has confidence in her sexuality. This is almost identically linked to what Shug almost teaches Celie about being a woman despite

calling her “ugly”. Shug allows Celie to express herself sexually and embrace her appearance much like Angelou. If someone is confident in their sexuality, it is far more likely for them to find meaning in themselves. Despite Holden being fully heterosexual, he corresponds to this idea as well as he is constantly attempting to have sex with various women, even getting jealous of his past girlfriend Jane being together with his room mate Stradlater. During the scene where he is given a prostitute however refuses out of spite, his sexuality is brought to question and shows a huge amount of confusion, much like Celie. The idea of sex is linked to finding an individual’s meaning as sexuality can be considered one of the bases of a person, for example, although it is not stressed much in the book, Celie is possibly homosexual which would have been extremely controversial in during that time period. Angelou supports the idea that women should be equal to men in all aspects of society. In the poem Still I Rise she constantly repeats this phrase to emphasize she is a woman and is independent. As Angelou is a poet and is obviously displaying a message in her poetry, her message of men undermining women within society is very clear. However with Celie it is implied by the reader which also allows us to further sympathise with Celie as she almost acts ignorant to the issues she is facing until the very end where she confronts Mr. Although Walker represents men fairly bias throughout the text as the majority of male characters are prejudice against women. Whereas Angelou despite being a feminist does state men may be “gentle” though she further goes on to state “they tighten up”.

Angelou embraces femininity and is large part of the feminist movement as she continues to campaign for equal rights for women. Her poetry is often “about a woman’s place in the world, how she is viewed and what her attitude should be.” As CL Washbrook has stated. The ideas of femininity are represented in the other novels. Celie looks up to both Sofia and Shug as independent women, despite their ideas being totally different as Sofia believes she is a woman because of her strength mentally and is presented physically however Shug believes her independence relies on her sexuality. Linking back to “Still I rise” Angelou can be seen to correspond to Sofia’s view of using your dominance as a woman over men, however as seen in Phenomenal Women, she refers to her appearance – The stride of my step – showing it is also important to glorify your appearance as a woman, much like Shug. As Holden is a man, we need to look at his view on women externally; for the most part he seems to see them as a sexual desire rather than individuals - although this may be due to his frustration sexually. Linking back to truths, for Holden, women being objectified is his truth and although controversial it is important to the moral message behind the book of finding ones self and meaning much like the truth that Angelou and Walker share.

The last point is the occupation of an individual, occupation is the situation of someone in a situation, a situation may vary depending on a characters occupation. In *The Color Purple* Celie is a house wife for the majority of the book who is suppressed by society, “Celie is always cleaning, cooking, and working the fields. She is always getting beaten by her husband”- said by Fatima and Josefina. whereas Holden is a student conflicted by his emotions and the persona’s in Angelou’s poetry represent herself as a feminist who may take any job a man could. These three varying occupations show how society does correspond with each other no matter who you are. Despite Holden and Celie being completely different characters, many of their traits overlap as they both have the same focus of finding meaning in their lives. Celie despite almost in an entirely different situation to Holden still finds she is frustrated sexually as is Holden.

In conclusion, the three authors use very similar methods in order to amplify the meaning of an individual, including loneliness and sexuality. The varying ways show how we live in an “uncertain world”. This is because there is no real guide line as to how we are supposed to discover meaning in ourselves other than education and our families, which from the two novels, we can see are not present throughout the whole story. Angelou uses her poetry rather than a persona in order to display meaning. As a comparison, all three authors are linked closely as despite their methods being varied in certain aspects, as a whole it is clear as to how they are displaying an individual is finding meaning.

## Bibliography

Alice Walker; The Color Purple; Phoenix; New Ed edition, 2004

J. D. Salinger; The Catcher in the Rye; Penguin, 1994

The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou); Virago Press Ltd; New edition, 1995

Links:

<http://www.mahalo.com/the-color-purple-quotes>

<http://www.shmoop.com/catcher-in-the-rye/religion-quotes.html>

Robert Bennett <http://www.answers.com/topic/the-catcher-in-the-rye-novel-7>

Margaret Averbach <http://www.answers.com/topic/the-color-purple-novel-7>

Fatima & Josefina

<http://www.tqnyc.org/2004/NYC040522//novel%20index/thecolorpurpleindex.htm>

CL Washbrook [http://en.allexperts.com/q/Poetry678/indexExp\\_69859.htm](http://en.allexperts.com/q/Poetry678/indexExp_69859.htm)

## 4.1 Principal Moderator's commentary

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The essay's opening is clear, introducing the three texts, acknowledging the task and establishing some of the appropriate context. Through the essay, the focus of each paragraph is quite clear, though there are some sudden jumps in the argument where the development of the candidate's thought is less clear. There are also occasions where the expression leaves some points obscure. Overall, the writing is straightforward.

The comparisons between the texts are maintained, though they tend to be, for the most part, comparisons of the behaviour of characters. The understanding of the texts is largely at plot and character level, with Celie and Holden often being discussed as if they are real people, rather than the literary constructions of their authors. This leads to some simple character-based judgements. There is little, save the reference to the epistolary novel, to show awareness of the writing of the texts. This highlights a problem with the treatment of the poetry text, as the poetry does not fit the character and plot-based discussion. Small quotations are taken from a number of poems to make thematic links, but the essay offers no sustained discussion of any one poem, leading to the poetry being under-represented in the essay.

The essay shows some appropriate, if simple, contextual awareness and reference is made to a small handful of critics. None of the critical views cited is explored, however, to any significant degree, showing an undeveloped awareness of their implications.

Footnotes are not provided, though there is a bibliography. It is not clear from the word count whether quotations have been excluded.

**6+11=17**

**“Satire and comedy are always linked together yet a satirical view of the world is necessarily a tragic one.”**

Satire is seen as a **“literary mode based on the criticism of people and society through ridicule”**<sup>1</sup>. By exposing human vices and follies through comedy it enables the writer to criticise their contemporary society. Comedy can be implemented as a shield to cover a more explicit opinion and avoid a problematic backlash from society. As humans we respond more to a comedic approach than a tragic one. The purpose of satire itself is not principally humour, but fundamentally a safeguard to cover a personal attack on what the author disapproves of. Satirists primarily use their writing to conceal what they view as non ideological within their contemporary society as the **“initial impetus for a satire lies in the age it was written”**<sup>2</sup>. In my opinion comedy cannot exist in satirical writing without the underlying tragic message, as demonstrated in *Gulliver’s Travels*.

Naturally, there are a vast number of ways in which the critical message of the author is conveyed through satire, yet humour seems to be the primary method used by most satirists. It engages the reader making **“the attack clever [and] funny”**<sup>3</sup>. The satirical writing must be entertaining or else it fails to captivate its’ audience. Humour is a necessity to soften the **“attack and disapproval”**<sup>4</sup> leaving it more **“palatable”**<sup>5</sup>. Whilst conveyed in diverse ways, the essence of humour is apparent throughout the writings of the three authors. In *Gulliver’s Travels*, the fundamental nature of the little Lilliputians being so aggressive in comparison to the giant Brobdingnags who feel outraged that Gulliver’s society use gunpowder definitively accumulates a sense of amusement, as does the idea of a war between countries based on an argument around which way to crack an egg. This light hearted satire allows the audience to understand Swift as a satirist and to permit recognition of the comical yet serious didactic message being illustrated.

Arguably, Chaucer also uses the technique of jocular satire to expose his criticisms and through his bawdy Fabliaux’s this humour is expressed. In *The Reeve’s Tale* the northern dialect **“Fer in the north”** is a source of comedy yet it satirises his opinions of a **“harsh, piercing, grating and formless”**<sup>6</sup> nature of the language. However, the *Miller’s Tale* shows more comedic puns than the *Reeve’s Tale*; and straight away there is a strong visual imagery of the **“short-sholdred”** miller ultimately fits in to our contemporary satirical view, appearing mostly through stand up comedians on the television. Chaucer satirises love by producing an unseemly act of Absalom kissing Alison’s **“naked ers”** nevertheless while the reader is disgusted, the imagery of the event typifies simply a comical effect. Furthermore it is entertaining to think Nicholas had to get John the carpenter drunk in order to believe that **“Noes flood”** is to drown the earth. Conversely, we do feel sympathy towards John as he is a religious man; to him this incident is credible. Still the humour progresses as John does not doubt what Nicholas has told him and thus goes off to find a **“knedding tube”** to float in. . I feel Chaucer’s objective is to satirise society yet, because the nature of their education was reasonably basic, the jokes stand to be vulgar and humorous, where as Swift is far more

<sup>1</sup> Article provided by teacher

<sup>2</sup> Jane Ogborn and Peter Buckroyd (*Satire*, Cambridge University Press United Kingdom, 2001, pg 17

<sup>3</sup> Article provided by teacher

<sup>4</sup> Article provided by teacher

<sup>5</sup> Article provided by teacher

<sup>6</sup> Stanley Stewart Hussey (*Chaucer: An Introduction*, Methuen and Co Ltd, London, 1971, page 19

sophisticated in his writing, as is Huxley. *Brave New World* is a warning of the future with few humorous aspects nonetheless when Huxley does expose this comedy the reader is still aware that its purpose is more to inform than to entertain. Lenina jokes about how **“there was something called democracy. As though men were more than physico-chemically equal”** yet what she says carries depth. Whilst she believes that their equal society is superior, we can look on to see the devastating effects of a world without a democratic system, leaving a tragic impact on its readers. Furthermore the structures of these paragraphs are short and to the point, leaving the imagery of indoctrination which paradoxically is used throughout the novel with their **“utopian”** society. As is a typical characteristic of satire beneath the comedy is a more underlying message. It was Swift who said **“Wit is the noblest and most useful humane Nature, so humour is the most agreeable, and where these two enter the composition of any work, they will render it always acceptable to the world”**<sup>7</sup>. I believe that this same technique is still used today with comedians such as Michael McIntyre and Lee Evans basing their jokes around a satirical message, thus comedy is seen very much as a way of putting forward a didactic, however not essentially a tragic, message to society.

In a 1930's British society people were largely affected by the economic depression, their answer was Prime Minister MacDonald whilst Germany's answer was, what was to become the most catastrophic fascist dictator in history, Hitler. As Fascism and communism were increasingly gaining a large influence of Eastern Europe, fear began to spread amongst other countries. This is the reason why, I believe, Huxley advocates the idea of using their names within his novel and although not expressively obvious, the reader can automatically recognise and be aware of Huxley's significant symbolism. It was a **“method of underscoring similarities to his functional dystopia and his own contemporary culture”**<sup>8</sup>; Most of the characters in Huxley's novel convey the names of political leaders, industrial leaders and scientists that he felt were the reasons for the fractures in society which are unveiled through the book. I believe by Huxley using these significant figures he felt he could warn his readers of the destruction certain peoples impact can create for the future. Lenina's name is evidently a parody to Vladimir Lenin who headed the Russian Revolution consequently overthrowing the Tsar in 1917. Additionally Bernard Marx mirrors two highly momentous people; Bernard Shaw, author of *Pygmalion* and one of the **“few writers left uncensored”**<sup>9</sup> and Karl Marx, one of the most famous philosophers and revolutionary communists to emerge in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hypocritically Huxley uses these names within his novel but makes history a forbidden subject in *Brave New World*, resulting in a tragically comedic effect. Correspondingly, in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eight-Four*, whilst it is not within the character's names, the description of **“Big Brother”** leads to an undoubted representation of Stalin, a former communist leader in charge of Russian from 1941–1953. Moreover the word “ford” is applied to replace the word God in *Brave New World*; the dates in which they use derive from **“the date on which Henry Ford introduced the Model T”** and unlike our society where we say A.D. after a date, they would say A.F., **“After Ford”**. Additionally, the allegorical messages captivated within both Huxley and Orwell's novels are presented in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Although Huxley can openly satirise names Swift could not, for the risk of severe punishment or even death. Yet he still manages to satirise through a style in which the readers can completely understand the symbolisms. In voyage one to Lilliput, Swiftly uses the names **“Lilliput”** and **“Blefuscu”** to satirise the ongoing tension building between England and France and furthermore it is Swift's idea of symbolising the name of his Protagonist, Lemuel Gulliver. Gulliver's name is a representation of the adjective gullible and thus Swift shrewdly satirises how all human beings have this innocent genetic default. Therefore through his writing the author subconsciously defends Gulliver's sycophantic irrationality, naively praises the emperor of Lilliput whilst we can concur that he is a sinister ruler put in power due to his height. Arguably due to the lack of comedy presented here by Swift, the ambiguity of the meanings reinforces a tangible tragic message where the

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<sup>7</sup> Article provided by teacher (Pagliaro 338)

<sup>8</sup> *Brave New World* – Satire of 1930s society (Article provided by teacher)

<sup>9</sup> *Brave New World* – Satire of 1930s society (Article provided by teacher)



symbolisms “**shimmering surface of suggested meanings [reveals a] denotative core**”<sup>10</sup>. Conversely to both Huxley and Swift, Chaucer does not satirise names as such. In the fourteenth century, Chaucer went on a pilgrimage with many people from different social classes. Due to the feudal system the diverse stories accumulated throughout the pilgrimage are based on the views of miscellaneous hierarchal characters; however this “**tale-telling competition**”<sup>11</sup> only began to pass the time on their slow pilgrimage to St Thomas Becket’s shrine in Canterbury. Their varied opinions conveyed through their stories enabled Chaucer to satirise contrasting stereotypes; for example the higher class Knight tells his tale of romance and fidelity which is then followed on by the miller “**that for drunken was al pale**”. The same low status miller with a “**thombe of golde**” is presented in the Reeve’s Tale as a manipulative thief, expressively commenting on a fourteenth century miller.

Whilst the authors spend a huge part of their novels symbolising the flaws in their societies, they further satirise their contemporary political systems. Eighteenth- century England, although it was ruled by a government and a legal system, it seemed almost totalitarian. In Lilliput Gulliver secures his liberty by moulding his behaviour to please the emperor and leaders of the country, this is an allegory for the ‘freedom’ that existed in England; “**where one may be technically free, the government and it’s many laws heavily constrained personal freedom**”<sup>12</sup>. Whereas in England you are punished if you commit a crime, in Lilliput you are rewarded if you stay out of trouble. In Huxley’s novel a similar satirical point is being made; whilst both the Old and New Testaments in the bible contain such allusions of God as a predestinator, in Brave New World these allusions have been changed by the World State to expel God and pass on this power to the governmental bureau. Furthermore the freedom that Swift satirises is seen in Huxley’s novel as the people were predestined “**according to the needs of society**”, their conditioning takes away their rights for any freedom. The World’s state’s motto is “**COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY**” yet the middle term carries ambiguity in its meaning; in truth no one has a true identity in Brave New World as the “**uniform batches**” of men and women had limited identity and freedom due to the concept of “**everyone belong[ing] to everybody else**”. Inescapably this futuristic novel conveys how stability within a nation can only be achieved “**only by minimising its citizens’ uniqueness**”<sup>13</sup>. In *Nineteen Eighty Four* the same ideas of *Brave New World* are enhanced; “**The masses were only there to be used for their [leaders’] idealism**” portraying the tragic yet, in Huxley’s opinion inevitable corollary for the worlds future. This is comparable to the Houyhnhnm’s a stranger to the “**bridle and saddle**” have full freedom and yet under their totalitarian state thought control, still manage to live in amity. Swift is satirising how our perceived freedom is under a democracy that forces us to live in constant competition and rivalry with each other. Additionally, in the voyage of Lilliput the emperor’s “**officers to search [Gulliver]**” refer to the Whig investigation of possible sedition in the Tory government that turned out with the death of Queen Anne in 1714 and in which Swift had served. In contrast to both Huxley and Swift, Chaucer satirises, not parliamentary politics, but church politics using mainly comedy as his driving force. Whereas Gulliver’s imaginary voyages were always to “**satirize the existing European order**”<sup>14</sup>, I feel Chaucer always had the intent of portraying the corruption of the church. In the *Canterbury Tales* certain characters such as the Monk and the Nun are on this expeditionary pilgrimage yet in reality they should have been at the monastery or convent, where, in their religious vows they promised to stay in solitude to pray. Moreover *The Miller’s Tale* uses comedy to illustrate how members of the church did not act as they were supposed to, the character of Absalom is a parish clerk and yet he does not respect the concept of marriage and therefore it is ironic because marriage is a sacrament of the church. Betjeman’s satire allowed him to make political statements without being overtly political; he approached the subject matter in an amusing way and thus communicated his message more effectively to a wider audience. Jonathon Swift used this technique in his *Modest Proposal* of 1729; as a way of preventing the children of Ireland becoming a burden to their parents

<sup>10</sup> David Lodge (Art of Fiction, Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd, 1992, England, page 139)

<sup>11</sup> Cambridge (Chaucer: The Reeve’s Prologue and Tale, Cambridge University Press, 1979, Page 4)

<sup>12</sup> Chris Bond Review (Lilliputian government and legal obfuscation, page 38)

<sup>13</sup> York Notes Advanced (Brave New World, Librarie du Liban Publishers, 2000, Page 17)

<sup>14</sup> Ernest Tuveson (Swift: a collection of Critical Essays, Prentice-Hall, United States of America, Page 111)

or country and a reaction to the famine and over population prospects of his contemporary, Swift published this largely satirical and more importantly political pamphlet. The indecorous suggestion that one child will **“make two dishes at an entertainment for friends”** and how **“infants flesh will be in season throughout the year”** is then contradicted by his against cruelty confession. Therefore I believe that while Swift was showing to the public that he did not really believe people should eat their children it made a thought provoking awareness of the conditions in Ireland at that time.

I believe that when Alexander Henderson said that **“Huxley is primarily a light philosophical essayist using the novel form to present the more superficial modes of contemporary thought and feeling”**<sup>15</sup> he was right. Throughout the book human shallowness and vanity are shown to be inherent flaw. When Lenina and Fanny are discussing Henry, the idea of being different in society was seen as something strikingly ugly **“Fanny made a grimace; smallness was horrible and typically low class”**. The same idea is conveyed by Swift in book two of *Gulliver’s Travels*. In Brobdingnag Gulliver starts to see that things are not always as beautiful as they first appear, after seeing the women of the land he is clearly able to see their **“course ill coloured skin”** and goes on to say that, English ladies only appear beautiful because we see them from a distance. If we look at their skin through a **“magnifying glass”** their **“defects”** would be visible. Swift is trying to show that human vanity is an innate flaw and although we all strive to be beautiful we can not under close scrutiny. Once Gulliver returns home, he cannot bear to look upon his family as their vanity and yahoo like behaviour sets them apart from the **“perfection of nature”** Gulliver saw on the Houyhnhnym Island. This ‘perfection’ is not only a hyperbole in *Brave New World* but taken to extremes by Huxley to endorse his warning of the future. The unseemly proposal that the words **“mother”** and **“father”** are forbidden and children are created in a factory is further heightened by the idea of **“sleep indoctrination”** and promiscuous premature sexual activity. Like *Brave New World*, Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* children are largely satirized. The comedy of **“they sometimes look just like you and that’s nice”** is contrasted by the tragic dystopian ideals of lowering the **“kindergarten age year after year until now we’re almost snatching them from the cradle”**. The long standing Christian moral that sex is seen to affirm the sacrament of marriage is broken in both Huxley’s novel and through Chaucer. The tragic view is made clear to the readers through the device of comedy nonetheless, Chaucer is questioning our morals as a reader to whether we can compare our actions to that of Alison’s. However whilst Nicholas and Alison have an affair **“thus swived was this carpenteris wyf”**. I believe Chaucer understood that marriage, in the middle ages, was seen as an unequal contract, something women did not get a lot out of and thus he does not blame her in *The Miller’s Tale*. Adultery in the middle ages is mostly presented in a fabliau thus Chaucer has the opportunity to discourage the myth of courtly love presented in the *Knight’s Tale*. Nevertheless Chaucer satirises this marriage as a stereotype of contemporary errors; many women married men much older than them for the inheritance however Chaucer is showing the flaws in a marriage like this and therefore providing a tragic view of the world.

Most satires unveil the flaws of politics or human behaviour however Huxley and Swift both satirise science in their novels. Huxley presents science as a **“public danger”** using John the savage as a representative speaker for his views and in Huxley’s foreword he even reveals that the Reservation is abhorrent as the World’s state. Even Huxley’s language parodies scientific language. Thus producing this insinuating tragic view that science alters our ever changing behaviour and the same problems can be found throughout our modern society. This sophisticated warning that **“man [will] become subservient to science rather science subservient to man”**<sup>16</sup> exemplifies the negative effects of scientific development. Whilst Huxley concentrates on this **“Soma”** induced society where the three different effects are an impossible combination I believe he is satirising how a utopian society is impossible; all the positives people want in live cannot all be obtained at the same time. Swift, although written two centuries before Huxley shared the same view. On the island of Laputa, Swift parodies the accounts he had read in *Philosophical Transactions* of the

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<sup>15</sup> Monarch Notes

<sup>16</sup> Brave New World – Satire of 1930s society (Article provided by teacher)

Royal Society and it was aimed to be understood by his contemporaries, especially in London. Gulliver discovers that not only are they taken up either “**intense speculations**” they do not converse with each other and therefore all their intellectuality is shattered because they “**fail to make practical use of their knowledge**”<sup>17</sup>. Swift satirises how the intellectual people of Britain maybe be thinking so much that they are socially inept and their supposed intelligence has no positive results for this country. Therefore comedy is used to satirise this tragic view of the world.

Tragedy is a form of art based on human suffering that ironically offers its audience pleasure. Swift was seen as one of the greatest and most influential satirists “**motivated by the desire to criticise and reform society [and] his dominant method is his use of irony.**”<sup>18</sup>. Indisputably, the paradoxical use of irony throughout the three texts provides evidence that humans do not often change; whether an author is writing fourteenth century poetry or a futuristic novel set in 2540 the message inferred is the same. Whilst comedy has become invariably satirical and often engages a wider audience, the profound pessimism is expressed through the satirical message and thus comedy does not have to exist in order to exemplify the authors’ concerns. Although a satirical view of the world is not always ruinous I believe, more often than not, it displays a tragic view of the world.

2,854 words

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<sup>17</sup> Wikipedia.co.uk – Laputa

<sup>18</sup> Jane Ogborn and Peter Buckroyd (*Satire*, Cambridge University Press United Kingdom, 2001, pg 17)

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## 5.1 Principal Moderator's commentary

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The candidate opens the essay by establishing the nature and purpose of satire; already there is a clear sign of the candidate's personal view, and this sense of personal engagement is a consistent feature of the essay. The texts are introduced in the subsequent consecutive paragraphs, giving the initial direction to the argument – the comedy of *Gulliver's Travels* and the Chaucer *Tales* are illustrated, with an indication of purpose, before the different nature of *Brave New World* is examined. The structure is clear and the writing purposeful, including technical terms accurately used.

The texts are balanced against each other throughout the essay in a clear discussion of satirical purpose. Quotations are well selected and integrated into the writing throughout. This leads to a fluent discussion, though it also means that the candidate seldom pauses to examine the quotations, so that close, detailed analytical discussion is not a strong feature of the essay. Points are made about northern dialect, character naming and 'symbolism', but without close examination of details of the writing and its effects. The point about Huxley's parody of scientific language is not supported. Although a critical comment by Henderson is explored, other critical references are passed over quickly without exploration of their implications. On the other hand, the essay demonstrates a good, clear understanding of the historical and political targets of the satires and makes useful and informed reference to a range of reading in the satirical genre.

Footnotes and bibliography are clear and appropriate, though 'Article provided by teacher' is not very informative. It is not clear from the word count whether quotations have been excluded.

**10+16=26**

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**“Modernism is characterised by a rejection of conventions and values.” Compare and contrast ‘Mrs Dalloway’ by Virginia Woolf, ‘Translations’ by Brian Friel and ‘The Waste Land’ by T. S. Elliot in light of this view.**

Modernism is a term used to describe a deliberate rejection of 19<sup>th</sup> century conventions. These conventions included Christianity and the idea that external reality from an objective standpoint existed and was desirable. Modernism is usually linked to the idea of ‘breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions, fresh ways of looking at man’s position and function in the universe and many experiments in form and style.’<sup>1</sup> Modernist writers were influenced by existential ideas and solipsism; Virginia Woolf herself once wrote that ‘Nothing has really happened until it is recorded.’ The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw revolutionary philosophical changes as the very nature of reality was beginning to come under question; inevitably art saw a time of change as well. Modernist writers such as T.S. Elliot explored this idea of modernism by writing in fragmented free verse and offering paradoxical allusions in order to envisage a society in flux<sup>2</sup>. Although not recognised as a ‘traditional’ modernist writer, Brian Friel’s play does tackle the idea of a society in flux through drama, as the audience witnesses the Irish undergoing wholesale changes as their values and language become undermined by the English. Virginia Woolf’s ‘Mrs Dalloway’ also challenges the conventions of British society by engaging the reader with a female protagonist whose passions and character are suffocated by conformity, in keeping with its modernist tagline; Woolf deploys the stream of consciousness technique, a characteristic of the modernist style which was influenced by this Freudian idea of solipsism, along with multiple discontinuous narrative view points. The First World War was a catalyst for further revolutionary changes; it seemed that the previous generation had failed due to millions dying over territory and it also saw the birth of the machine age which greatly changed living conditions. Thus, although ‘Translations’, ‘Mrs Dalloway’ and ‘The Waste Land’ are presented in different forms and were not all written in the same literary period, ‘Translations’ being written in the post modernist period of literature and ‘The Waste Land’ and ‘Mrs Dalloway’ in the modernist, one can draw similarities from the way that all three deal with societies that have been changed by war and conflict and new ways of thinking.

All three texts deal with a society either undergoing or in the aftermath of drastic change. Both Eliot and Woolf were writing in the aftermath of the Great War and this society in flux is reflected in their writing styles. William Carlos Williams claimed that T.S. Eliot’s poem ‘wiped out our world as if an atom bomb had been dropped upon it.’ Eliot and Woolf offer many paradoxical allusions; in the first line of his poem Eliot describes how ‘April is the cruellest month,’ the impact of this opening line is to emphasise a sense of infertility in the poem as this time of the year is usually associated with new life and fertility. Woolf describes how her protagonist ‘felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged,’ Here Woolf is writing of a young girl of eighteen years who is representative of a generation that has been denied its youth due to war. The word ‘unspeakably’ is used by Woolf to portray the difficulty in communication between generations as the world went through changes, this is also evident in ‘The Waste Land’ and ‘Translations’. Many critics of the modernist style say that modernist writers merely set out to alienate their readers in order to intentionally reject any existing conventions. However it would be untrue to state that this is the extent of T.S. Eliot’s creative process; Eliot’s line in the third section ‘The Fire Sermon’; ‘But at my back from time to time I hear the horns and motors’ not only puts his poem into a contemporary

<sup>1</sup> J.A. Cuddon’s definition of modernism in ‘Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory.’

<sup>2</sup> Phrase used by Michael Levanson in his definition of modernism. [www.bookrags.com](http://www.bookrags.com)

context but is also a reference to Marvell's 'To His Coy Mistress', furthermore the first seventeen lines of the opening section are written in blank verse, traditional of Marlowe, therefore we see that T.S. Eliot does not completely reject traditions and values but rather draws upon them in order to invoke a broader context; he said himself that 'immature poets imitate, mature poets steal.'<sup>3</sup> Brian Friel's 'Translations' also tackles the issue of a rejection of conventions and values. Friel's play advocates the progression of the Irish as 'The old language is a barrier to modern progress,' but ironically it attracts the audience to Irish traditions and values by presenting two antithetical characters in Yolland and Lancey; Yolland is an English romantic character, an idealist who embraces Irish tradition and language which he finds 'really astonishing' while Lancey is aggressive and stereotypically English in his formal nature; he is '*uneasy with people*' and ruthless in invading Baile Beag. The audience are made to feel affectionate towards Yolland due to his romantic enthusiasm, while the English oppressors are symbolised in Lancey, the embodiment of imperialist aggressor. Although Friel invites the audience to feel sympathetic towards Yolland, he ultimately emphasises that he's 'a bloody romantic' who we see as perhaps too idealistic and embracing the Irish culture makes him vulnerable as he is the sacrificial character in Friel's play of ideas.

Another characteristic of modernism is the demonstration of impact of war and conflict. Eliot makes reference to Starnbergersee and offers a line in German, this reference to Germany invokes a sense of war and conflict in the poem. Similarly Woolf sets the scene of London by describing a 'violent explosion' and how 'everything had come to a standstill', although this violent explosion is not directly related to conflict it does give the sense that the conflict is indeed ongoing as it still exists in the mind of Septimus Warren Smith, a traumatised war veteran suffering from shell shock. Evidently the events of World War I had a great effect on the two writers and the rejection of values and conventions held by a society that did so much damage to itself is inevitable. 'Translations' shows a similar deterioration of conventions and values; the change in Friel's Ireland is perhaps more drastic than that of Eliot's and Woolf's environments, as we see the language, the only means we have of engaging with the character in a play, is challenged and replaced; 'Bun na hAbhann' becomes 'Burnfoot' and the only way for the characters to become successful is by learning English and leaving Baile Beag as Owen has and Maire intends to. Despite the play being first published in 1981, Friel presents the action in 1833, symbolised through the attempted Anglicisation of the Irish place names. This changing of history threatens the identity of the Irish, after all 'nothing has really happened until it is recorded.' connecting to a historical time of British colonialism and also a time of great change in the whole of Europe with the French revolution occurring in 1789.

The modernist period also saw a time when, as Woolf puts it, 'even the gender was now in dispute.' Critics have said that the damaged psyche of humanity brought about a challenge on the cultural notions masculine identity.<sup>4</sup> Women had an important role in the war as they filled in for the absent generation of men and after this, campaigns for equal rights grew in impetus as the suffragettes and suffragists put pressure on the government to act. Also Woolf wrote critical essays and in a review of Dorothy Richardson's 1919 novel 'The Tunnel' she argued that there was a clear 'discrepancy between what she has to say and the form provided by tradition for her to say it in.' The title 'Mrs. Dalloway' suggests the female protagonist's subservience to her husband; 'she was not even Clarissa anymore; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway.' However, the male characters in the novel are presented as dull and passionless, mentally ill and broken or unsuccessful and overly ambivalent, as Septimus suffers from 'headaches, sleeplessness, fears, dreams' and Peter Walsh is a deluded character who struggles to accept the loss of 'the triumphs of youth.' These failing men address another idea which challenged 19<sup>th</sup> century convention; homosexuality. Sally Seton is presented as a far more desirable character than any of the men in the novel; like Eliot, Woolf shows that she too was influenced by traditional literature as she quotes Othello's line; 'it is were now to die 'twere now to be most happy.' Here Woolf is heightening a sense of regret felt by Clarissa in regards to her subservient lifestyle dominated by men.

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<sup>3</sup> T.S. Eliot wrote this in 'The Sacred Wood'

<sup>4</sup> [www.sparknotes.com/poetry/eliot](http://www.sparknotes.com/poetry/eliot)

T.S. Eliot also explores a theme of damaged masculinity. The War had seen an entire generation of young men lost and the modernist writers wrote of the impact this had on gender roles; Tiresias, the main character of 'The Waste Land' is a hermaphrodite, 'an old man with wrinkled female breasts,' and is a character that embodies two genders. In his poem 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' we see the central character observe emasculation as he hears women 'talking of Michelangelo'. Women were now able to attend school so the intellectual gulf between the two sexes was closing. It is evident then that Victorian conventions and values concerning gender roles and sexuality have been rejected by Eliot and Woolf.

Woolf was influenced by the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud; rather than being given one consistent personality, Woolf's characters were given a wide variety of impressions and emotions. Like Freud, Woolf believed that sensation, memory and repression were formed in early childhood; at a point when Clarissa feels particularly negative in her emotions she thinks of herself as 'a child exploring a tower'; not only does this portray the sense that she is alone but this also has sexual connotations as this comes from a suppressed incident in her childhood. Here one can see a difference between Woolf's style and that of the Edwardian and Victorian writers; rather than omnisciently intruding on the action, Woolf writes with great emotional subtlety; in doing so Woolf allows the reader to engage with the character on their own level, one might contrast this with Thomas Hardy, as many critics have argued that his intrusive and omniscient authorial perspectives mean that we can never fully engage with his characters because we are forced to interpret them in the way that Hardy so bluntly tells us to. Woolf rejects this particular narrative convention in favour of the stream of consciousness, a modernist technique.

In 'A Genealogy of Modernism' Michael Levanson writes that in 'The Waste Land' "discontinuity is no more firmly established than continuity." At times the poem conforms to a more conventional rhyme and meter but the reader becomes somewhat alienated when Eliot suddenly begins writing in German 'Bis gar keine...etc.' Another poetic convention is rejected by Eliot in that the poem lacks a central narrative voice throughout, many argue that Eliot and all modern writers are pretentious in this sense as they alienate their readers for the sake of being avant-garde, this is in some ways true but is also the point of modernism; it is necessary that conventional forms and ideas are rejected in order to envision a society in flux, so I would agree that these writers do indeed seek to alienate their readers but that there is also a motive and point in doing so. Eliot's lack of a central omniscient voice throughout the poem reflects a theme in conflict in 'The Waste Land', Eliot enforces this with his use of juxtaposition; 'I was neither living nor dead,' Again it is evident that Eliot is looking to reflect a time where contrasting ideas had led to revolution.

The form adopted by T.S. Eliot in 'The Waste Land' also succeeds in re-envisioning a society in flux; the end of the opening section 'The Burial of the Dead' sees characters struggling to be heard;

There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying 'Stetson!  
'You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!'<sup>70</sup>  
'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,  
'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?

Eliot offers no interjection between the characters as they all attempt to make themselves heard, this is similar to the way two languages are spoken in 'Translations' and not everyone understands each other and are consequently unable to find any compromise. The pace of the poem is fast in order to reflect the frantic nature of this struggle to be heard.

The poem offers a partial rhyme structure which is inconsistent; this invokes alienation in the reader who has no omniscient authoritative voice to guide them. The use of foreign languages further emphasises this alienation as Eliot expresses the idea that people can never fully understand each other. Friel presents foreign place names and difficulty in communication; Eliot's

use of the German language will not be understood by the majority of his reader, thus portraying a difficulty in communication. Similarly Friel shows two characters from two different societies who speak two different languages trying to form a relationship but they have to overcome the barriers put in place by society and language. Ironically both Yolland and Maire both want to embrace the other one's culture but what is significant is that Friel is presenting a circumstance in which characters must shed themselves of their old conventions and values for practicality's sake. Conflict arises as Hugh is against the idea of pupils learning English as he explains that 'English couldn't really express us, while Maire declares 'I don't Want Greek. I don't want Latin. I want English,' demonstrating the conflict between tradition and a need to progress. Although the English are presented as the antagonists of the play, we see that adopting the English language is a necessity for the Irish if they wish to progress as a society; the character of Jimmy shows what may become of those who cling on the Irish traditions and values. Jimmy is a character who is completely out of touch with the real world and his thoughts lie in the forgotten civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome and rather than look for a wife he has chosen to fantasise about fictional characters such as 'Athene' and 'Gradia'. The anglicising of the Irish place names further emphasises the arrogant and bureaucratic nature of the changes imposed by the English; Lancey cites purposes of 'land valuation' and 'more equitable taxation' as reasons for these changes but it is clear that the English are seeing to undermine cultural values for their own convenience. It is evident that 'Translations' does not portray a rejection necessity in order to progress with this constantly self updating world. 'Mrs Dalloway' also expresses this need for change, as Woolf writes that the upper class were 'living on borrowed time. Its values...are under attack...the empire was crumbling fast.'<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore the three writers use symbolism to portray change. In 'Mrs Dalloway' Aunt Helena's glass eye can be seen as a symbol of her refusal to see the failings of the British Empire, Helena is an old fashioned character who is appalled by the behaviour of Sally Seton. This shows the disillusionment with the British Empire that Woolf discourages in 'Mrs Dalloway'. In contrast Brian Friel shows the conflict involved with change through gestures; in the beginning the gestures are light-hearted as Doalty moves the surveyors' poles which would likely be received by the audience with a laugh. However they become more serious as we learn that the horses belonging to the Englishmen were violently moved to fall off the edge of a cliff by the Donnelly twins and we are led to expect the worse when we find out that the same notorious brothers were involved with the disappearance of Yolland. Eliot's Fisher King is a symbol of the frailty of human love as the mythical character is one that offers allusions of sexual degradation; the myth says that the Fisher King's infertility causes the land to dry up, hence Eliot's waste land of 'dry bones' and 'exhausted wells', a symbol in itself of the infertility of spirituality. In his notes on the poem Eliot translates the final chant of 'Shanith shanith shanith' in 'What The Thunder Said' as 'peace with passeth understanding' reflect the resignation to the fact that fertility will not return while the Fisher King is sitting on the shore in preparation for his imminent death.

The literary techniques deployed by the writers are also unconventional; the structure of Eliot's 'The Waste Land' is not easily recognisable since it is neither narrative, dramatic, descriptive, lyrical nor meditative. This ambiguous structure accompanied with a lack of a central narrative voice alienates the reader as it is difficult to recognise where the poem is going and exactly who is taking us there, as an attempt to follow the 'I' in the poem only leads the reader to discover that 'I' is not the same character throughout. We see that Woolf's use of the stream of consciousness technique also reflects the modernist period as she is turning away from the conventional omniscient role of the narrator, David Lodge said in 'The Art of Fiction' that 'towards the end of the century reality was increasingly located in the private' and individual selves were 'unable to communication the fullness of their experience to others.' The intimacy between the reader and protagonist is such that formal tags such as "she said" and "she thought to herself" become inappropriate as we would then be merely overhearing her thoughts and conversations from a distance, rather by using this technique we are able to engage more closely with her thoughts. Therefore, if this conforms to modernism (and I have argued that the novel does),

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<sup>5</sup> Alex Zwerdling – 'Virginia Woolf and the Real World'



then modernism is indeed characterised by a rejection of the conventions and values in that they are new methods used to reflect change and new ideas.

In conclusion Brian Friel, Virginia Woolf and T.S. Eliot all present a rejection of conventions and values. Although 'Translations', 'The Waste Land' and 'Mrs Dalloway' are all presented through different mediums, all of them show societies forced to undergo change; the post-war environment of Woolf was one that led her to explore new philosophical and psychological ideas concerning existence and gender identity while Eliot's 'The Waste Land' presents a plethora of paradoxical allusions in a fragmented form to reflect the society that was forgetting its old failing values in search of new ones. Conflict is put into a different context by Brian Friel as he shows the dramatic colonisation of Ireland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a play but this idea of old values and traditions being rejected is also displayed. It is clear that all three writers were challenging of convention in a time of drastically changing values, however it is also true to say that these writers have been influenced by others. While 'Translations' look to the past to show a change in society; Friel's Ireland is presented as a society that needs to adapt to the English customs if it does not wish to become like the fallen and forgotten Greek and Roman empires. The techniques used by Woolf and Eliot to portray these changing societies can also be described as unconventional as they reject traditional forms and structure to represent new ideas and the changes they are bringing. Of the three writers it is Eliot that continues to challenge convention as the contexts of 'Mrs. Dalloway' and 'Translations' give them a slightly dated quality; by presenting seemingly unrelated images together without any natural order Eliot reflects a sense of dramatic change which the world is constantly undergoing. The narrator makes the point that one can still find meaning in something from its fragmented and seemingly chaotic nature. This point is perhaps what has, for some people, made Eliot a spokesman of the modernist era as it characterises the vast artistic expression that was born out of a society in flux in the aftermath of The Great War.

## **Bibliography**

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Word Count    3459  
                    2934 (excluding quotations)

## 6.1 Principal Moderator's commentary

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This is a clearly organised essay. The opening focuses on the question, contextualising the term 'modernism' appropriately and introducing all three texts. As it does so, it acknowledges that *Translations* is not a conventional modernist text, but makes a case for the play's inclusion in the argument. The subsequent paragraph openings indicate the direction of the argument, though the actual development of ideas from paragraph to paragraph is not always clear.

The essay moves consistently and fluently between the three texts, maintaining the comparison between them. While there is slightly more detailed discussion of *Translations* than the other texts, the essay has a good balance of discussion and comparisons are frequent, based on detailed understanding. References and quotations are consistently integrated successfully into the discussion. Analysis could have been developed further; though there are references to Eliot's use of German and some thoughtful discussion of narrative style in *Mrs Dalloway*, other opportunities are not taken and in particular there is little exploration of the dramatic qualities of *Translations*.

The candidate clearly argues a personal view, suggesting that there is a level of pretentiousness in modernism, and explores view by critics such as Williams and Levanson. This too is an area which could have been developed. Contexts, though, are confidently dealt with. The essay demonstrates well developed understanding of modernism itself, and the historical and political contexts of Ireland and the aftermath of the First World War.

Footnotes, bibliography and word count are clear and appropriate.

**12+23=35**

**“They’re dead, but they won’t lie down.”<sup>1</sup> In light of this quotation, how do Orwell in ‘Coming up for Air’, Roethke in ‘Collected Poems’ and Friel in ‘Translations’ present the idea of lost identity?**

All three of the texts concerned present an upheaval, a rediscovery and a “*stirring of the dust of age*”<sup>2</sup>, through the use of both the physical and metaphysical representations. In Orwell’s ‘Coming up for Air’, along with ominous and prescient references to an impending war, the reader journeys into the past of the protagonist in his self-exploration, which later, upon his return to his childhood haunts, shows the brutality of industrialisation and the wanton destruction of a rural idyll. This idea of revisiting one’s childhood is also undeniably prevalent in Roethke’s highly personal poetry, in which he uses allegory and metaphor to explore the innermost emotions prompted by his upbringing, for example in ‘Journey to the Interior’: “*In the long journey out of the self,/There are many detours, washed-out interrupted raw places/Where the shale slides dangerously*”. Even this, a relatively obscure poem of Roethke’s, deals with the purely negative nature of a loss of identity: “*washed-out*”, “*raw places*” and “*dangerously*”. This imagery is similarly adopted by Friel to show the ebbing-away, of a ‘world’, a way of life, an identity, and the locals’ response to such a detrimental shift, which has been described as “*a sequence of events in history which are transformed by Friel’s writing into a parable of events in the present day.*”<sup>3</sup> All three authors, autobiographical elements aside, agree on the importance of an effort to engender a sense of a personal journey, to convey the complexity of one’s passage through life and the listlessness of old age: the detrimental shift in identity from childhood to the present and, later, to the future. However, do the writers, through their protagonist or persona, pave the way for their future or do they remain in the past and, therefore, metaphorically “*dead, but not lying down*”; a figure of the past living in the present and an authorial ghost-like presence?

George Orwell, in ‘Coming up for Air’, chose to convey the protagonist’s, George Bowling’s, opinions of the world in which he grew up with air of detachment and almost scientific objectivity: “*Why? Because in a matter of speaking I am sentimental about my childhood-not my own particular childhood, but for the civilisation, which I grew up in and which is now, I suppose, just about at its last kick.*” This exploration, in which the protagonist gives his past contemporary relevance, shows the author contemplating Bowling’s idealistic views on the world of his parent, teachers and role models: the England of the past, before the Great War and, ultimately, his former identity. This is expressed in sentiments such as; “*They lived at the end of an epoch, when everything was dissolving into a sort of ghastly flux, and they didn’t know it. They thought it was eternity. You couldn’t blame them. That is what it felt like.*” This philosophical assessment injects a sense of the simplicity and naivety of the characters in his past, and, ultimately, himself, who has, unlike his parents, been tainted by his involvement in the war. It is also reflected in the language used: “*dissolving*” provokes the idea of steady erosion of ‘old values’, being a draw out affair, not a sudden change. The above also present the idea that Bowling’s existence, and therefore humanity’s, has been and will be dominated by “*ghastly flux*”, not by happiness created through the fulfilment of his boyhood dreams: exemplified by Orwell’s use of words such as “*ghastly*”. This has been described by Michael Sheldon in his book ‘George Orwell: the authorised Biography’ as: “*The sleepy fields of southern England are not as protected from the outside world as they might seem and Orwell’s vision of the future is one in which this ‘deep, deep, sleep of England’ is shattered by the sound of bombs.*” This suggests that Orwell’s opinion of childhood is that it is deluded, ignorant, yet idyllic, period of time when considered in retrospect: an idea which is instigated in the protagonist by the media, a newspaper and, therefore, the recorded past: a technique which can

<sup>1</sup> From ‘He’s Dead But He Won’t Lie Down’ by Gracie Fields, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> Violet Fane, Victorian poet.

<sup>3</sup> Seamus Deane

be cited as being a relic of the author's journalist past and also his belief that *"all art is propaganda"*<sup>4</sup>. This idea also runs through the poetry of Theodore Roethke, who in his poem 'The Reckoning', states: *"We hunt the cause of ruin, add, / Subtract, and put ourselves in pawn:/For all our scratching on the pad, / We cannot trace the error down."* This sombre comment upon the weaknesses of mankind, with its usage of negative vocabulary, such as, "ruin", "subtract" and "error" enlightens Roethke's interpretation that such "errors" that haunt the present have their foundations in the past: an idea not dissimilar from those utilised by his contemporaries such as Yeats and Auden: *"Accurate scholarship can/Unearth the whole offence/From Luther until now/That has driven a culture mad"*<sup>5</sup>, which is not only similar to Roethke's 'The Reckoning' in message, but also in form. Also, Roethke's use of incorporative language, "we", we employed in order to involve the reader, has, in fact, the adverse effect: it alienates us, and our opinions, because the poet's sentiments have undertones of accusation, of pointing out the reader's flaws. Therefore Roethke does not address the idea of a personal lost identity; instead he chooses to address the idea of a universal loss.

Friel, on the other hand, takes the idea of a universal loss of identity in 'Translations' and dramatically applies it to a particular community, Baile Beag a moment in history, the early 1800s, which then acts as a microcosm for the struggle for Ireland's independence. However, Brian Friel's loss has a distinct catalyst: the involvement of the British and its resulting separatism: *"The English soldiers below in the tents, them sapper fellows, they're coming up to give us a hand. I don't know a word they're saying, nor they me: but that doesn't matter, does it?"* This prophetic comment shows Friel, from an early stage in the play, acutely highlighting the antithesis that existed between the groups, which, later on in the play, erupts into violence. While this assertion seems innocent in its connotations, it acts as an ironic prophecy: it does matter that these differences exist, *"Our Seamus says two of the soldiers' horses were found last night at the foot of the cliffs at Machaire Buide and..."* This subtle inference which involves the slaughter of British animals shows the situation rapidly descending into immorality and also presents an inability to exist under the 'tyrannical' rule of the British. This means, therefore, that the community are taking direct action, trying to impede change and that their identity becomes marked by violence, explored, by the playwright, through the dramatic device of gestures. This, in the words of Andy Morrison, shows that *"Translations' is Friel's vehicle for representing methods central to the colonial discourse of Imperialist aspirations. Running beneath the surface Friel portrays the clash between languages, and the use of education as a method of resolving the cultural and unequal relationship between colonised and coloniser."* In this sense Friel is creating a tone that inhabitants of 'Baile Beag' are in fact *"dead, but not lying down"*: that their struggle for the retention of their culture, ultimately, will prove to be more detrimental than beneficial.

The inherent militancy of Friel's play is not shared by George Orwell, whose protagonist's passive sense of recollection dominates 'Coming up for Air': *"Is it gone forever? I'm not certain. But I tell you it was a good world to live in. I belong to it. So do you."* This unusually candid aside has the effect of personalising his prose: instead of George Bowling's voice, we hear that the author's. Also the use of incorporative *"so do you"* leads the reader to question and re-explore their childhood identity. In this respect Roethke and Orwell share a technique, the former of whom, for example, states in his poem 'The Renewal': *"I teach my sighs to lengthen into songs, / Yet, like a tree, endure the shift of things."* The poet's inclusion of such poetic sentiments, coupled with use of metaphor and simile, provokes a tone of willing subordination: the poet does not oppose the changes which shape his identity, but does realise the effect they have upon him. Roethke, like his later pastoral counterpart Robert Frost, is often characterised by his use of the natural world to give credence, an explanation, to human emotions: in this case use uses the *"tree"* to emphasise the stasis of humanity, our reluctance to resist change. This is often considered to be a relic of the Romantic Movement, of Wordsworth and his contemporaries, and their 'pantheism', Roethke himself, , in interview, offered an explanation for this, his undeniably most complex technique: *"I believe that the spiritual man must go back in order to go forward."* Through statements such as this, Roethke

<sup>4</sup> From All Art Is Propaganda: Critical Essays, George Orwell

<sup>5</sup> From Auden's 'September 1, 1939'

emphasises the importance of the past, suggest that the modern world is lacking in “*spiritual men*”: an idea which reflects the poet’s own Christianity and was common in the work of other religious poets of the twentieth century, for example, Czeslaw Milosz.

George Orwell’s cynical, almost comic, presentation of 1930s Britain in ‘Coming up for Air’, and the impact it has on George ‘Fatty’ Bowling, was cited by critics<sup>6</sup> as being the reason for the novel’s potency, particularly passages such as the following: “*Perhaps a war, perhaps a slump—no knowing, except that it’ll be something bad... Into the grave, into the cesspool—no knowing... There’s something that’s gone out of us in these twenty years since the war. It’s a kind of vital juice that we’ve squirted away until there’s nothing left... Nerves worn all to bits, empty places in our bones where the marrow used to be.*” This outpouring, with its densely packed potent, staccato, vocabulary and macabre imagery, shows Orwell truly adopting the persona of his middle-aged protagonist and using him as a guise to express his own tendentious opinions on the years that led to the Second World War. Also, a sense of continuity is created: “*There’s something that’s gone out of us in these twenty years since the war*” is a statement similar to other critical sentiments in previous passages, emphasising their importance. Orwell also chose his words carefully, for example, “*grave*” acts not only as a metaphorical prophecy, but also, in this context, injects a sense of collective destiny: *everyone* is subject to this change, not just the protagonist. This is continued in instances such as: “*The people who made them up hadn’t heard of machine-guns, they didn’t live in terror of the sack or spend their time eating aspirins, going to the pictures and wondering how to keep out of the concentration camp.*” This reference to life in the past and in the future, utilised to draw a stark literary contrast between the idealism of the Victorian era and 1930s realism, shows the author’s belief that they were indeed ‘simpler times’ and places the novel in a specifically pre-Second World War context. In this sense, the authorial influence on the protagonist can be described, in a symbolic sense, as being “*dead, but not lying down*”, as can the society of his 1930s Britain: what is the point in resisting inevitable political and social change?

However, this idea is not exactly shared by Friel in ‘Translations’, who prefers to induce the change in a more oblique manner: “*Sweet God, did the potatoes ever fail in Baile Beag? Well, did they ever-ever? Never!*” In this outburst, the playwright chose to explore the significance of a devastating historical event and the repercussions it had on the population of a small Irish village, and the whole of Ireland, which is emphasised by Friel’s use of repetition, blasphemy and rhetorical questions. Friel then chooses the capitalise on this and therefore employs a more dramatic, brutal, anecdote: “*Some people here resent us... I was passing a little girl yesterday and she spat at me.*” Thus, in one stroke, the playwright raises the tension in the dialogue between the English troops and Irish. Roethke, on the other hand, applies this idea of a radical division but, again, gives it a personal connotation: “*I conclude! I conclude! My dearest dust, I can’t stay here./I’m undone by the flip-flap of odious pillows.*” Desperate, panic-ridden, inner-monologues such as this hark back to the psychological literature of the early nineteenth century, for example, Stendhal’s ‘Le Rouge et le Noir’, which deals with the inner-monologue of a man, Julien Sorel, attempting to raise himself from his plebeian birth. It is, however, Roethke’s ambiguity which strikes the reader: what exactly are these “*odious pillows*” and why do they have such a striking effect upon the poet? Roethke intended to create confusion using his obscure allusion: It is not important what these objects are, only what they represent in terms of the poet’s emotional development since his childhood, namely, that he has progressed from a fondness of the past, “*my dearest dust*” to “*being undone*” by a mysterious catalyst. It is exactly this that makes Roethke’s poetic, abstract, exploration of the past so different from his contemporaries, for example Thomas James Merton, who preferred to recount his childhood in a far more precise manner: “*At this precise moment of history/with Goody-two-shoes running for congress/we are testing supersonic engines.*”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Such as J.Hatton.

<sup>7</sup> From ‘At this Precise Moment of History’

While Orwell and Roethke focus mainly upon the gradual, universal erosion of general values, Friel toys with the destruction of the most recognised symbol of Irish independence, the Gaelic language: *“It [Gaelic] is our response to mud cabins and a diet of potatoes; our only method of replying to inevitabilities.”* Excerpts such as this show just how integral the language is to the culture of ‘Baile Beag’, and indeed Ireland, and that, if taken away, the society would have no way of *“replying to inevitabilities”* apart from violence, the physical gesture, exemplified in Friel’s use of the Donnelly Twins, whose names soon become synonymous with the conflict of nationalism. In contrast Orwell’s exploration of language: *“I cured myself of dropping aitches and got rid of most of my cockney accent.”* The author makes his protagonist systematically destroy his ‘heritage’ in order to be successful in later life. Furthermore, Bowling’s complete lack of pride in his regional origin strikes the reader as strange considering the romanticised view he possesses of his childhood. This can be construed as being a product of the gradual uniformity that crept into English accents in the twentieth Century. This, indeed, may have been Orwell making a comment upon the less recognised dangers of industrialisation, a preoccupation of his literary forefathers, which, again, blossoms in later chapters upon the protagonist’s return to ‘Lower Binfield’. Friel, in an unusual step, chooses to insert an Englishman, Yolland, who, while being a part of its destruction, yearns to learn more of the Irish Culture and, in particular, Gaelic. Yet he asserts his failure: *“I may learn the password but the language of the tribe will always elude me, won’t it?”* The word *“tribe”* incites a sense of Ireland being a ‘barbarous colony’ and a collective identity, which, indeed, was reflected in the attitude of many of the British officers, shown in the form of the character Lancey. This is an ironic turn, is reversed by Friel: *“English succeeds in making it sound... plebeian.”* This prejudice has connotations of, almost child-like, aloof malice: although Gaelic is ‘dying’ it still superior to English in the minds of the most intransigent inhabitants.

Roethke, being an archetypal pastoral poet that spoke out against the Modernist writing inspired by the World Wars, does not explore the erosion of the methodology of language, rather choosing, again, to make oblique, and philosophical, references to us as spiritual entities. *“Will the self, lost, be found again? In form?”* An excerpt such as this, with its usage of rhetorical questions, seemingly challenges the reader to take a *“journey into the interior”* of themselves, and literature, and ultimately, leads us to the question: have we lost our own past and former identity? The structure of ‘Journey into the Interior’ reflects the idea of a journey: stanza and lines length increase as we learn more of the poet’s past.

Roethke also drew most of his inspiration from observing the actions of his parents, as one contemporary friend suggests: *“His impressions of the adult world and the way it differed from the world of the child would later profoundly influence the subjects and imagery of his verse.”*<sup>8</sup> It is this which let to the poet’s questioning, his criticism, of how the two age groups interrelate, merge and evolve through time. Indeed, this has also been suggested of Orwell, for example, Michael Shelden stated: *“And he [Orwell] marvelled at how vast the changes have been since the days when he was a boy, which paved the way for the lyrical celebration of his childhood habitat in ‘Coming up for Air’.”* Therefore the two authors both had an innate urge for rediscovery, to unearth and explain the importance of their, and our, past: a common Modernist idea which was expressed by authors as Samuel Beckett and Virginia Woolf.

Love also plays an integral role in the loss of the past; in Orwell’s ‘Coming up for Air’, love in the present, inevitably, is presented as being a pale shadow of that of the past: *“I’m grateful to Elsie, because she was the first person who taught me to care about a woman. I don’t mean women in general, I mean an individual woman.”* This example of ‘old-fashioned’ romance acts as an antithesis to the shallow relationships of the 1930s and, therefore, George Bowling’s current wife, Hilda: *“Of course, the fly in the ointment was Hilda.”* It becomes clear that Orwell makes Bowling’s wife representative of everything that is wrong with current society and the former seemingly complies with the maxim: *“Nature has given women so much power that the law has very wisely given them little.”*<sup>9</sup> Indeed, emphasised chauvinism is an integral part of Orwell’s persona:

<sup>8</sup> Michael Ayrton, English writer and artist

<sup>9</sup> Samuel Johnson, 18<sup>th</sup> century English writer and social commentator.

*“Mother never said grace: it had to be some one of the male sex.”* Here, and in other excerpts like it, tradition and archaism rules, shown in the emphatic *“had”*: the opinions of “Fatty” Bowling are most certainly not acceptable in pre-war Britain and, therefore, *“dead, but not lying down”*, meaning that Orwell’s protagonist is unable to ‘let go’. Such an idea constitutes a lost identity, one of prejudice and superiority: traits that characterised the Victorian and Edwardian eras and most certainly the shop-owning class of that time. Roethke’s view of love is disguised by heavy philosophical, ambiguous, comments, which is reflected in the ponderous and irregular structure of poems such as ‘Song’: *“O love who hear/The slow tick of time/in your sea-buried ear/Tell me now, tell me now.”* In ‘Song’, which has echoes of T.S. Eliot’s ‘The Wasteland’, the poet’s personification of love as a detached entity acts as an allegory for its complexity: *“sea-buried ear”* has many connotations, but most clear is that idea love is not ‘listening’ to the needs of the poet and that, therefore, the emotions that were once present have now left, a highly personal technique shared by those of the Romantic clique and later poets, for example, Sylvia Plath, whose ‘Daddy’ is a bitter elegy on a stark loss of love: *“Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I’m through.”* The form of ‘Song’, short staccato lines and short stanza, also adds credence to the idea that this is an emotional outpouring. ‘The Renewal’ also offers an insight into Roethke’s belief that love can counter the *“winds of change”*<sup>10</sup>: *“My flesh is breathing slower than a wall./Love alters all. Unblood my instinct, love.”* Short, almost authoritative statements, which are then coupled with poeticisms; dominate Roethke’s love poetry; in this case the poet uses a simple double refrain to emphasise the need for love to act as a cure, *“unblood my instinct, love.”* Such short sentences also have the affect of conveying panic and confusion through their rapidity, as used by earlier poets, such as the African-American ‘staccato’ author, R. Nathaniel Dent: *“Rises and falls in a wild ecstasy/Scare is this finished/when chords all diminished.”*<sup>11</sup> Thus, Roethke simultaneously discards the maxim of emotionally *“being dead, but not lying down”*, by proving the opposite: he sustains his idea of love being omnipotent and ever present. Friel, in ‘Translations’, also explores the power of love to transcend difficulties: *“I wish to God you could understand me.”* Thematically, a lack of communication dominates sentiments such as the above, expressed by the poet’s use of *“understand”* and an *“appeal to heaven”*<sup>12</sup>, *“I wish to God”*, which then highlight the ingrained nature of the divisions, which have not been created by mere individuals, but by two polarised forces: the Irish and the English. This is an idea expressed in earlier Irish literature, for example, Yeats’s ‘The Second Coming’: *“and what rough beast, its hour come round at last/Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?”* It is very clear that Yeats’s *“beast”* is representative of the British and their identity: an influence still potent in opinions of Friel’s characters.

The examination of a bleak future and the way in which it contrasts with the past and present also plays an integral role in the three works. Orwell, in ‘Coming up for Air’, chose to convey this by foreseeing the ‘spectre of war’ and the impact it will have on England, which is almost reminiscent of the gospel ‘passion narratives’: *“Who’s afraid of the bombs and the machine guns? ‘You are’, you say. Yes I am, and so’s everyone who’s ever seen them.”* This self-questioning, with its use of affirmative language, inevitably leads the reader to empathise, and relate to, the protagonist and his past: a particularly ‘Orwellian’ technique and, therefore, is commonplace in ‘1984’, ‘Keep the Aspidochelone Flying’ and ‘A Clergyman’s Daughter’, all of which involve a protagonist with a chequered past. This is furthered by Orwell’s first person narrative and total adoption of the ‘lower middle-class’ persona, shown, in this case by the use of colloquial vernacular speech: a technique that may have been inspired by J.B. Priestley’s picaresque classic, ‘The Good Companions’ of 1929 and D.H. Lawrence’s ‘Lady Chatterley’s Lover’. The author always, in interview, maintained that this particular technique was used to reduce the commonplace air of detachment between character and reader and to create a shared identity. This is then contrasted with serious comments disguised with humour: *“People took politics very seriously in those days. They used to begin storing up rotten eggs weeks before an election.”* Assertions such as this present the idyllic naivety of the England of the past as opposed to the dangerous present.

Roethke preferred to use the natural world as his inspiration and as an aid for his own personal

<sup>10</sup> Harold MacMillan, English Politician and Prime Minister 1957-1963.

<sup>11</sup> ‘The Rubinstein Staccato Etude’ by R. Nathaniel Dent from the ‘Book of American Negro Poetry’

<sup>12</sup> Militia slogan from the American Revolutionary War, 18<sup>th</sup> Century

history: *“But when I breathe with the birds,/The spirit of wrath becomes the spirit of blessing,/And the dead begin from their dark to sing in my sleep.”* This alliterative extended poetic simile suggests that the poet draws respite from the natural world and, therefore, uses it to escape from the negative aspects of his past, present and future and instead raises the ‘good memories’ to *“sing in his sleep”*: also shown in the contrast drawn between words such as *“wrath”* and *“blessing”*. In ‘Translations’ Friel, again, takes the bleakness of the future and applies it to a specialist world; that of language. For example: *“But remember that words are signals, counters. They are not immortal.”* This ironic prophesy seems to contradict the vociferous anti-change comments of later and earlier passages of the play, but shows a gradual realisation, a subtle epiphany, that, ultimately, that the original culture of Ireland is not *“immortal”* and is doomed to change despite the objections of the locals: an idea shared by much earlier writers such as Jonathan Swift in the eighteenth Century.

To conclude, in the words of an anonymous critic, *“everything that is important to you is transient and will drift away like sand on a beach... Welcome to your gilded cage of suburbia, children and a wife that doesn’t love you. Welcome to the present, welcome to the future.”* These words, said of ‘Coming up for Air’, provide a neat summary for the three works and, in particular, the last refrain, *“welcome to the present, welcome to the future”*, for it is applicable to both the plight of George ‘Fatty’ Bowling and ‘Baile Beag’. Ultimately, however, Orwell, Roethke and Friel, despite the differing time periods in which their works were written, the late and early twentieth century, all effectively tackle the issue of divided loyalties, be they negative or positive, to both the past and present. It can also be construed that the three authors, by writing such a work, are themselves *“dead, but not lying down”*, that their own personal exploration shows an inability to let the past and their former identities rest, to, as ‘Fatty’ Bowling suggests in ‘Coming up for Air’, *“say goodbye”*.

### **Word Count**

3144 without quotation and 4136 with quotation

### **Bibliography**

- ‘The Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke’, by Theodore Roethke, published by Anchor Books in 1991
- ‘Coming up for Air’, by George Orwell, published by Penguin Classics in 2000
- ‘Translations’, by Brian Friel, published by Faber and Faber Ltd in 2000
- ‘George Orwell: The Authorised Biography’, by Michael Shelden, published by Minerva in 1992



## 7.1 Principal Moderator's commentary

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The sophisticated address of this essay is apparent from the opening paragraph, which introduces the texts, supported by well-chosen detail in order to establish the direction of the argument. In this instance, the rhetorical question at the end of the first paragraph works well to open up the debate. Sentence structures in the essay are varied and flexible to present subtle ideas and appropriate critical terminology is used throughout the essay with confidence, establishing a clear critical register. The direction and purpose of each paragraph is clear, giving coherent direction and shape to the argument.

Quotations are well integrated, maintaining the fluency of the writing, though they should not be in italics unless the quoted text is typographically presented that way, and some of the longer poetry quotations would have been clearer had they been printed in their lines. The essay contained a number of sections of sharp analysis, examining diction, imagery, dialogue, form and structure in different places. The comparison is consistently detailed, the candidate making a number of close links between the texts as well as establishing major parts of the argument on each respective text.

A number of varied critical opinions are cited, their implications usually being explored well, though this is not quite consistent. The candidate's own careful judgement remains clear. A thoughtful understanding of the significance of the social, historical and literary contexts clearly informs the response.

Not all references are footnotes, but overall, footnotes and bibliography are clear and appropriate. It is clear, however, that the essay exceeds the word limit for this unit, even when quotations have been excluded. While there will always be some slight leeway – we do not expect candidates to finish an essay mid-sentence – the word limit is a serious matter. This essay should not have been submitted at this length and candidates should be reminded to shape their material within the required limits.

**15+24=39**