

OCR F662 Standardisation Resource for Centres

OCR AS English Literature

Coursework

Unit F662: Literature post 1900

Contents

1	Introduction	3
	How to mark F662 Coursework Folders	3
2	F662 Coursework Folders	4
	Task 1: Close reading or re-creative with commentary (15 marks)	4
	Task 2: Essay on Linked Texts (25 marks)	5
3	Candidate A	8
	Task 1: How does the opening chapter of <i>Oryx and Crake</i> , “Mango”, prepare the reader for the subsequent narrative?	8
	Task 2: “ <i>The Handmaids Tale</i> may be set in the future, but Gilead is a society haunted by the past”. To what extent do the writers of <i>The Handmaids Tale</i> and <i>Nineteen-Eighty-Four</i> explore the development of political fundamentalism and totalitarianism in the twentieth century?	9
	Commentary	12
4	Candidate B	13
	Task 1: Write a thousand-word close analysis of forty lines or fewer of Larkin’s poem <i>Here</i>	13
	Task 2: “Interpretation of sexuality and the exploration of gender roles are an intrinsic element of <i>Captain Corelli’s Mandolin</i> ”. Discuss the portrayal of men in the novel and in <i>Dispatches</i> .	14
	Commentary	17
5	Candidate C	19
	Task 1: Saturday creative writing coursework	19
	Task 2: 'Post-colonial literature is generally defined as that which critically or subversively scrutinizes the colonial relationship.' Compare and contrast the ways in which <i>Small Island</i> and <i>Translations</i> present the relationship between colonisers and the colonised.	20
	Commentary	24
6	Candidate D	25
	Task 1: History Boys - re-creative writing – Dakin’s Oxford Interview	25
	Task 2: Death and Rebirth	27
	Commentary	29
7	Candidate E	31
	Task 1: Critical appreciation of a passage from 'Death of a Salesman' pg 57-60	31
	Task 2: Show how the central characters in 'A Streetcar Named Desire' and 'Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil' lead lives consumed by illusion and isolation. To what extent do the respective settings provide appropriate backdrops to the themes	32
	Commentary	35
8	Candidate F	36
	Task 1	36
	Task 2	37
	Commentary	40
9	Candidate G	41
	Task 1	41
	Task 2	42
	Commentary	45

1 Introduction

How to mark F662 Coursework Folders

This Standardisation Pack is intended for use by teachers in OCR centres preparing candidates for the English Literature unit F662: Literature Post 1900.

The examples cited 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 2009 June examinations.

The pack should be used in conjunction with the F662 Coursework Marking Guidelines, and in conjunction with the advice given by the Principal Moderator for this unit in the Report on the Units for AS English Literature, both of which are available on the OCR website.

2 F662 Coursework Folders

Candidates are required to submit a coursework folder of a maximum of 3000 words.

There are two tasks:

Task 1: Close reading OR re-creative with commentary

Task 2: Essay on Linked Texts

Task 1: Close reading or re-creative with commentary (15 marks)

Although two very different outcomes can be produced, they are to be marked by reference to the same assessment objectives:

AO1: articulate creative, informed and relevant responses to literary texts, using appropriate terminology and concepts, and coherent, accurate written expression

AO2: demonstrate detailed critical understanding in analysing the ways in which structure, form and language shape meanings in literary texts.

AO2 is twice as important as AO1 in the assessment so marks allocated need to bear in mind this weighting.

Close reading

Candidates are required to write a close critical analysis of a section of their chosen text. It should be about 1000 – 1200 words long.

Ideally this should be a piece of shaped writing with an argument rather than a collection of observations on an extract/critical appreciation and the best way this can be achieved is to set a task that relates the passage to the wider text in some way. (How characteristic of x's style and concerns in the collection as a whole is this poem? To what extent is the behaviour of y in this scene out of character with the rest of the play? In what ways does chapter z set up the main issues of the novel and how are they developed later?) This ensures that the requirement for full text study is met by this item.

The section of text analysed should be supplied with this item.

Re-creative writing with commentary

Candidates are required to produce an item of re-creative writing based on a selective passage of their chosen text or poem with a commentary.

The text should be an attempt to re-create the world/concerns/style of the studied text and be 3-400 words in length.

The commentary should engage with the style choices of the candidate as well as the attempt to mirror important themes/elements of characterization. The writing will make reference to specifics of the text produced and the text studied. Ideally this should be 7-800 words in length.

Assessment

Step 1: Determine the band

1 Match evidence of achievement against the key descriptors of the different bands:

Band 5 – excellent; Band 4 – good; Band 3 – competent; Band 2 – limited; Band 1 – very little.

- 2 Use the best fit method, balancing strengths against limitations, to establish the appropriate band. It is important that the double weighting of AO2 against AO1 is observed at this stage.

Note that assessments refer to bands and do not correlate to grades.

Step 2: Determine the mark

To determine the mark within the band, consider the following

Descriptor	Award mark
On the borderline of this band and the one before	At bottom of band
Just enough achievement on balance for this band	Above bottom and below middle of band
Meets the criteria but with some slight inconsistency	Above middle and below top of band
Consistently meets the criteria for this band	At top of band

Often teachers in seeking to be positive move too far up the mark ranges. It is wise to determine the band and then think about whether the answer gives a sense of the whole text beyond the extract focused upon, whether the answer has an overarching argument, whether form/structure/language receives due weight, whether the answer has the vocabulary of the subject and to what level, etc. If the answer has deficits, then it should not be pushed too far.

Task 2: Essay on Linked Texts (25 marks)

Candidates are required to produce an essay on contrasts and comparisons across texts. Ideally this should address a provocation or investigate some observation. It should include awareness of the impact of contextual features and the response of readers/audiences/critics/cultural commentators to the texts, while addressing the task or answering the question. Its length should be about 1800 – 2000 words.

Candidates are assessed on:

AO1: articulate creative, informed and relevant responses to literary texts, using appropriate terminology and concepts, and coherent, accurate written expression

AO3: explore connections and comparisons between different literary texts, informed by interpretations of other readers

AO4: demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

AO3 and AO4 are equal weight but worth twice as much as AO1; the breakdown is AO1 (5), AO3 (10) and AO4 (10) making for the 25 mark total.

Assessment

Step 1: Determine the band

- 1 Match evidence of achievement against the descriptors from the assessment grid. Besides the broadscale excellent versus good versus competent versus limited versus very little banner headings, it is important that changes in the wording of different bullet points are recognised; for instance, AO4 for Band 4 mentions “good, clear evaluation of the significance

and influence of contexts” and for Band 5 “consistently well-developed and consistently detailed well-informed understanding of the significance and influence of contexts” ; AO3 for Band 3 mentions “answer informed by some reference to different readings” and for Band 4 “good level of recognition and some exploration of different readings”.

2 Use the best fit method, balancing strengths against limitations, to establish the appropriate band. Here there are a number of basic questions:

- Does the essay have an ongoing argument?
- What is the level of comparison – integrated in themed paragraphs? Alternating paragraphs dealing with different texts but the same point? Connections in introduction, changeover from one half of the essay to the other and conclusion? Two mini essays that are juxtaposed?
- Does the essay have alternative views of the texts? What form do these take? How often are such views included?
- What type of contextual material is there? There is no hierarchy: social historical is as good as biographical is as good as genre-orientated, etc; but it is important to consider if contextual elements occur frequently and with a fruitful range of insights on the text(s) or whether there is depth in terms of the contextual discussion pertaining to the text.

Note that assessments refer to bands and do not correlate to grades.

Step 2: Determine the mark

To determine the mark within the band, consider the following

Descriptor	Award mark
On the borderline of this band and the one before	At bottom of band
Just enough achievement on balance for this band	Above bottom and below middle of band
Meets the criteria but with some slight inconsistency	Above middle and below top of band
Consistently meets the criteria for this band	At top of band

Often teachers in seeking to be positive move too far up the mark ranges. It is wise to determine the band and then think about whether the answer keeps the task in mind or drifts off onto separate texts, whether the links between the texts are illuminating, whether a critic cited is used to unlock or gloss a text, whether the contextual material is embedded or seems tag-on, whether the comparison and critical views are as impressive as the contextual factors considered, etc. If the answer has deficits, then it should not be pushed too far. If the answer has deficits, then it should not be pushed too far.

3 Candidate A

Task 1: How does the opening chapter of *Oryx and Crake*, “Mango”, prepare the reader for the subsequent narrative?

In Atwood’s typical narrative style, “Mango” uses language in a way which causes the reader to question our own reality, and to make links between this section and the subsequent novel. The opening sentence of “mango” in itself is significant in doing this. Beginning with the word “Snowman” immediately establishes his importance in the narrative as a whole, and introduces the ambiguity and mystery that is unravelled (or perhaps complicated depending on the reader’s interpretation) throughout the following chapters. The juxtaposition of the chapter title “mango” and the opening word “Snowman” created contrast, and instantly suggests the rejection of the exotic connotations conventionally associated with “mango” that become apparent later in the novel. The sentence; *“Snowman wakes before dawn”* also make use of widely recognised pathetic fallacy associated with dawn; for example its traditional associations with regeneration, new beginnings, and new life. However, these implications are shown to be false, one the dystopian theme of degeneration becomes apparent. On the other hand, one could argue that some elements of the pathetic fallacy associated with dawn – an new life, for example – are undeniably present in the novel, although in a far more disturbing manner; for instance the artificial creation of new species through predominantly accidental scientific development. This adds to the sinister and mysterious nature of the chapter, and again creates links with the rest of the novel.

Language is also used in other ways in “mango”. The word itself has exotic connotations with suggest paradise, however, the novel as a whole rejects such clichés, and shows that the time in which the novel is set is anything but paradise. For example; *““Crake!” he yells. “Asshole! Shit-for-brains!”... “You did this!” He screams at the ocean”*. Here, the true horror of the situation is highlighted through the portrayal of Snowman’s anger and frustration. In conjunction with this rejection of modern cliché, Atwood uses paradoxical phrases such as “Rosy deadly glow” to show that nothing is what it seems – perhaps drawing parallel with our own world, and the images of imminent doom - comparable to much dystopian fiction - such as global warming, that we have grown familiar with. Later in the novel, we learn exactly what lurks beneath the bizarre surface, linking the opening chapter again with the subsequent novel, and further preparing the reader for the dystopian theme of the narrative. The somewhat poetic sound to phrases such as the example above also helps the image to resonate in the reader’s mind, and allow them to refer to it later.

Oryx and Crake, similar to many of Atwood’s other writings, focuses strongly on the perceived beauty of language; a focus which “mango” introduces. For example; *“... refrain from raping the natives. It wouldn’t have been said raping. Refrain from fraternizing with the female inhabitants”*. This reflection upon words that we later learn have become obsolete in Snowman’s world links the opening of *Oryx and Crake* to the rest of the novel. As is made clear subsequently, sexual normalcy has altered completely over time, and so whilst Jimmy may have lived in a society where “rape” was a recognisable word – if only as an aspect of the “free world” which had been left behind – its meaning has since died altogether. Notable also is the emphasis on the social etiquette which existed in Jimmy’s society. Where Snowman says; *“it wouldn’t have been said raping”*, the implication is that a certain standard of propriety had be dictated by society – although arguably this “respectability” is rejected in other ways throughout the novel. In Jimmy’s era, the world was constantly experiencing rapid scientific developments, and somehow the standards of sexualisation within society were cased to distort significantly – as shown through Snowman’s regular recollection of events in his past. Similarly, the word “rape” links the first chapter to the rest of the novel, through the later discussion of other sexual issues; for example the apparent popularisation of the child porn industry.

Atwood’s use of free indirect speech allows the reader a better grasp of the novel, and Jimmy’s character, although arguably it makes the narrative more disjointed. In “mango”, Snowman

describes how; “*there are a lot of blank spaces in this stub of a brain, where memory use to be.*” This created a connection between his disorganised thought processes, and the disjointed nature of the narrative which it echoes - flicking between past and present interchangeably. It also implicates Snowman’s fallibility as narrator, because not only does he suggest that his memory is no longer complete – implying that he may not be entirely reliable -, but using the word “stub” to refer to his mental capacity suggests that he feels he is no longer the person he was, and so views the situation in a negative way. This narrative fallibility is continued throughout the novel, its early introduction allowing the reader to gain a more accurate idea of the plot as it develops.

The apparent absence of time, as we know it, is clearly an important aspect of the novel. Its first suggestion comes in the chapter “mango”; “*A blank face is what it shows him. Zero hour. It causes a jolt of terror to run through him, this absence of official time.*” The use of monosyllabic words – mimicking the ticking of a clock – to form a poetic rhythm in the first sentence causes it to resonate in the reader’s mind, creating more of an impact. This, when combined with the following sentence “Zero hour” is particularly effective as a means of mirroring the terror shown in the next line – for example, words such as “jolt” and “horror” – and indeed throughout the novel, at a lack of “official time”. The elongation of the phrase “zero hour” through assonance and use of disyllabic words also portrays the vast expanse of time that Snowman feels his life has come to stretch over, the terror of which is exaggerated further by the double negative; “*Nobody nowhere knows what time it is.*” As if a consequence of the lack of contact, control and order that he experiences, Snowman clearly views the world pessimistically. This, combined with the paradoxical way in which Snowman wishes he had less time, supports suggestions of his narrative fallibility, and portrays the horror of the absence of “official time” - both common features which run throughout the novel.

Evidently, a number of themes underpinning *Oryx and Crake* are established in the opening chapter, although often only subtly. Whilst Atwood’s narrative style – using a fallible narrator, and adding little initial explanation (for example, refraining from using descriptions to elaborate upon the immediate introduction of Snowman) - prevents the plotline from being revealed too early, the reader is allowed an opportunity to question, and develop their own theories about the novel from the outset. This is a valuable feature of the novel, and adds to the mystery and interests throughout *Oryx and Crake*.

Task 2: “*The Handmaids Tale may be set in the future, but Gilead is a society haunted by the past.*” To what extent do the writers of *The Handmaids Tale* and *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* explore the development of political fundamentalism and totalitarianism in the twentieth century?

The twentieth century, fraught with issues of fascism, communism, fundamentalism and totalitarianism, quickly became the basis for an entire subgenre of literature. George Orwell, for example, is famous for his novels *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* (hereafter referred to as *1984*), which both arguably stemmed from living in a society where politics is all. Orwell himself once said; “*all issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies...*” (a). Similarly, Margaret Atwood is renowned for her novels concerning feminism and politics, *The Handmaids Tale* being perhaps the best example of this. It details a society where right wing religious fundamentalism has taken power, ironically leading to the breakdown of family values which the modern reader would view as sacred.

1984, first published in 1948, was written in a time where the threat of the Cold War was only just coming into play in America, where the American Press presented the Soviet Union as more of a “moral experiment” than something of any threat. Orwell, however, was cautious of the potential problems that the extreme “socialist government in the Soviet Union might present to the rest of the world (b). *1984*, as a result, became a promise of doom. The title itself suggest to the reader

that the future, in Orwell's opinion, could end up being at risk from the widespread communism and fascism that had already become prevalent in many societies.

The novel echoes many aspects of fascist regimes (such as that of Nazi Germany) as well as aspects of communism (e.g. Russia under Stalin's rule), as suggested by the critic Philip Coppens, who claimed that Orwell mimicked a number of totalitarian control techniques on the novel. The Thought Police, for example, can be seen as a "*Gestapo... incarnation whose power seems absolute*" (c) in Nazi Germany, while the Spies and Youth League can be likened to the Hitler Youth and Little Octoberists. *The Handmaids Tale*, equally, incorporates the same idea with the inclusion of "Eyes", who serve the same basic purpose as the Thought Police in *1984* and the Gestapo in Nazi Germany; "*Perhaps it is a test, to see what I would do. Perhaps he is an Eye*". Another incorporation of a twentieth century totalitarian method of control, built into the two novels, is the suggestion of "disappearances" due to political rebellion, however mild. The methods with which rebels against the Party "disappeared" in *1984* can be likened to methods of oppressive political control used not only in Nazi Germany and Communist Russia, but also many other autocratic societies around the world, particularly in the twentieth century. For example, the novel details how "*People simply disappeared, always during the night... every record of everything you had ever done was wiped out... You were abolished...*" Orwell's concise knowledge concerning the way in which political "disappearances" took place clearly shows a link between the novel and such political regimes as those which existed at the time the book was written. Similarly to this, *The Handmaids Tale* also refers to the way in which radicals of society were known to "vanish" – supposedly – off the face of the earth; "*she saw the van coming for her. It was better*". The implication here is that committing suicide, as Ofglen did, was better than allowing the totalitarian state to destroy her spirit, as well as her body.

The Handmaid's Tale and *1984* both mimic the use of propaganda that helped figures such as Stalin and Hitler rise to power. Posters of *Big Brother* in *1984* (incidentally holding great resemblances with the physical appearance of Stalin, as claimed by numerous critics) are described to have been on walls everywhere in *1984* London. For example; "*At one end of it, a coloured poster... depicting simply an enormous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features*". This use of poster propaganda holds great similarities with those of Hitler and Stalin, which portrays them as heroes, when they were in fact, quite the opposite. Particularly in Nazi Germany, certain groups of society were also suggested to be "evil", and were used as scapegoats (for example Jews and Gypsies). The same use of propaganda can be seen in *The Handmaids Tale*, where in the Red Centre, the Aunts enforced Gileadan ideology upon the prospective Handmaids; "*Where I am is not a prison, but a privilege, as Aunt, as Aunt Lydia said, who was in love with either/or*". This, whilst being somewhat ineffective in the case of Offred, was done with the same intention of that in Nazi Germany; to eventually enforce the views of the totalitarian dictatorship. In the case of another Handmaid, Janine, however, enforcing such ideology had proven successful. For example; "*By that time Janine was like a puppy that's been kicked to often, by too many people, by random; she'd roll over for anyone, she'd telly anything, just for a moment of approbation*". Janine's spirit, unlike Offred's and Ofglen's, had been broken, and so was for more porous to Gileadan fundamentalism.

The presentation of each authors protagonist as an antihero acts as a means of showing the susceptibility all people have to indoctrination from a totalitarian state. Examples of this can be seen throughout history, particularly in World War II (the time during which *1984* was written) where members of society were forced to co-operate with the dictatorial government (namely Nazi Germany). In *1984*, Winston is described as "*a smallish frail figure, the meagreness of his body emphasized by the blue overalls...*" Clearly the protagonist is a long way from being a heroic figure in the novel a heroic figure in the novel. Furthermore, Winston eventually betrays Julia to The Party, arguably showing the essential weakness in willpower that all humans are guilty of. Orwell deliberately uses words such as "frail" and "meagreness" to show the characters mediocrity, portraying him as a normal person, as opposed to the hero which we might expect in a more optimistic novel. Similarly to this, Offred in *The Handmaids Tale* shows no outstanding qualities, instead being exposed as a woman too tentative to make a real advances towards rebellion – in contrast to Moira, who is revealed to be rebellious and free-spirited, as Offred describes; "*I want*

gallantry from her, swashbuckling, heroism, single-hand combat". Instead of being the distorted heroine figure that Moira represents, Offred's fear causes her to merely seek feeble pleasures – rather than whole-heartedly rejecting the totalitarian ideals- in acts of rebellion that she hopes will never be discovered (for example, being part of the underground organisation Mayday).

However, the secret rebellion which Winston and Offred participate can arguably be seen as the authors' means of suggesting a degree of optimism within the narrative as a whole. In relation to *The Handmaids Tale* this isn't unlikely as the ending of the novel is left open to the readers own interpretation. However, the last chapter of *1984* leaves little room for sanguinity, and so it is unlikely that any hope for Winston –and indeed, mankind- was intended. This suggests to the reader that Winston, at least, was a representation of mankind's downfalls in character, and not a vision of hope for the future.

Whilst there are clearly many aspects of the two novels that echo those shown in twentieth century totalitarian and fundamental societies, there are some significant differences which suggest that, as Orwell himself claimed, *1984* (and indeed *The Handmaids Tale*) is more about the vulnerability of western societies towards such issues, than an attack towards socialism. Orwell said that; "*my recent novel is NOT intended as an attack on Socialism... but as a show-up of the perversions... which have already been partly realised in Communism and Fascism... The scene of the book is laid in Britain to emphasise that the English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else and that totalitarianism, if not fought against, could triumph anywhere*" (c). This claim can be supported by several aspects of *1984*. The portrayal of London in the novel, according to many critics, was based on the real post-war London. The Ministry of Truth where the protagonist Winston is said to work was based on the BBC building in post-war London, which also incidentally sold "Victory Pie", an item which obviously influenced Orwell in his literary creation of "Victory Gin" and "Victory Apartments". The intention of creating this initial parallel was to take aspects of Eastern-European totalitarianism, and show what impact it would have on the Western world, if successful.

The basis on existing societies can also be seen in *The Handmaids Tale*, which as previously mentioned is set in the USA. Atwood's novels are often criticisms of the present world, and its future possibilities (for example, rapid and "immoral" scientific developments, which form the basis of *Oryx and Crake*). *The Handmaids Tale*, in which case could be set in the USA in order to highlight the problems it already faces. For example, the religious fundamentalism rife in the southern states of the USA could arguably have been part of the source of the novel. Whilst it has some clear basis on example of totalitarianism that has occurred in the past, this could simply be in order to show what could happen again if the same things continue to happen. The character Serena Joy can be seen as a literary device to show this. She is described as being a religious traditionalist, before the takeover of Gilead, when her own ideology became her downfall. For example, "*Her speeches were about the sanctity of the home, about how woman should stay at home. Serena Joy didn't do this to herself... but she presented this failure of hers as a sacrifice she was making for the good of all*". The religious moral values which she had held sacred, ironically lead to her own oppression.

In the modern world, there still exist examples of how people can be controlled by the State in a way many would deem unacceptable. Many women in the Middle East, for example, are oppressed and treated as second class citizens, perhaps acting as Atwoods influence for writing *The Handmaids Tale*. In fact, some direct parallels with Middle Eastern culture can be seen within the novel, for example, the "uniform" of the Handmaids. The "habit" is said to make a Handmaid look like "A Sister dipped in blood", a description which suggests similarities between this, and the traditional burkha worn by many Muslim women. The aim of such dress, in both circumstances, is to maintain female modesty, and whilst in the Middle East this has long been a characteristic of the culture, *The Handmaids Tale* is based in the USA where this has not always been the case. This in mind, it has been suggested by many critics that *The Handmaids Tale* is based upon the religious fundamentalism of the Middle East, set upon a backdrop of Christian no Muslim, theocracy. Throughout the novel, the impact that religion has had upon the fictional society of Gilead is emphasised. In fact, Atwood quotes Genesis before the narrative even begins, to show its importance; "*And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die*". Additionally to this, the idea is repeated by Offred

later in the novel *“Give me children, or else I die”*, showing the control which the religious state has on society, particularly Handmaids. The same religious control can be seen today in the Middle East, although generally upon the entire female populace. Arguably, the use of religion to instill fear was an issue of great concern to Atwood.

In conclusion, Atwood and Orwell explore issues of political fundamentalism and totalitarianism in the twentieth century, to an extent which influences the reader greatly in their own interpretation of the two novels. Whilst it is not clear whether the intention was to forewarn about the future, reflect on the past, or condemn current issues at the time of publication, both *1984* and *The Handmaids Tale* appear, as Coral Ann Howells said of the latter; *“haunted by the past”*.

Bibliography:

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(b):
http://www.marcopolo.provincia.venezia.it/tommaseo/lezioni/Inglese/AdP_02_03/Marin/The%20Dangers%20of%20Totalitarianism.html

(c): <http://www.philipcoppens.com/1984.html>

The Handmaids Tale by Margret Atwood

Nineteen Eighty Four by George Orwell

Commentary

The Critical Piece has a specific focus which includes a whole text aspect. The candidate addresses the “prepare the reader for the subsequent narrative” prompt throughout, although in a rather generalised way. The task might have been better phrased with a language focus given how this is a key concentration of the essay (The first sentences of each of the first four paragraphs, and then what follows, show this.) The discussion as a whole is strong on form, structure and language features (AO2) and successfully links these to ideas in the novel; there is good address to specifics at the start of *Oryx and Crake* and a sense of later events although these could be more explicitly stated. The fifth paragraph mentions “horror” but perhaps meant to refer to “terror”, the word in the quotation. This is a high Band 5 mark, albeit not the highest, although the candidate throughout tries to create argument (AO1).

In the Linked Texts piece, a task of considerable challenge, the candidate has a good focus on both texts in the first paragraph, then just concentrates on *1984* in the second. The third paragraph substantially lifts the essay with very sophisticated material being delivered satisfying both aspects of AO3 and AO4. The fourth paragraph continues the high level of discussion and there is much to credit in the fifth, although the Centre here flagged up interpretation as “readings” which is too loose a view of this AO3 strand; similarly, the word “arguably” while suggesting different ways of looking at the text is not really indicative of Band 5 achievement of this aspect. This approach to AO3 via the word “arguably” is then repeated throughout the essay. Indeed AO3 generally is not as strong in the latter part of the essay as the discussion tends to split the two texts and fixes on *The Handmaid’s Tale* right at the end. This is Band 5 work as a whole, but not right at the top, although undoubtedly well written (AO1).

Overall, a very accomplished folder from as Centre following a dystopian literature theme.

4 Candidate B

Task 1: Write a thousand-word close analysis of forty lines or fewer of Larkin's poem *Here*

Here, by Philip Larkin, was published between 1956 and 1957, and is based around a journey through a conurbation around Hull, switching between urban and rural areas. The journey consists of transitions between both types of area, allowing comparisons to be drawn between the two, as well as allowing the narrator to be detached and adopt the role of 'social commentator', observing life through the train window the entire time. This commentary allows the reader to gain an insight into what is arguably Larkin's philosophy on the nature of a paradise on earth, and whether such a place is somewhere "here" on earth or somewhere entirely different and "out of reach".

The poem works through a series of recurring themes that run both on and beneath the surface of the poem's narrative. The first is the theme of journey, in particular, the train journey that the narrator travels on through the poem. The train journey the narrator experiences is represented by the repeated use of the word "swerving", which implies that the narrator is not in complete control of the journey he has undertaken. The poem's bouncy rhythm, enhanced by an irregular yet present rhythm scheme, and repeated instances of sibilance and alliteration, could all be interpreted as a mimic of the rhythm of a train. Throughout the poem, Larkin obviously describes movement from city to countryside and back again, making the entire "plot" of the poem a journey in itself. This could account for Larkin's selection of a title for the poem – the place that can be considered "here" is constantly changing throughout the poem, as Larkin's narrative jumps from place to place.

On a metaphorical level, the train journey could arguably be interpreted as a representation of life, fate or destiny. The way the narrator is veering from place to place indicates a lack of control over the physical and literal journey that forms the narrative of the poem, as well as representing a lack of control over the course of one's own life. An extension of this is the minimal description of "workman at dawn", highlighting life's tendency to be full of brief and sometimes meaningless connections with others. The journey itself, as a narrative device, also serves another purpose of allowing Larkin's narrator to travel quickly between the town and countryside areas, allowing the narrator to reflect upon the similarities and differences between the two.

The idea of conflicting lifestyles in rural and urban areas is seen running throughout the poem, as Larkin spends the poem using a variety of literary devices to promote rural life and degrade the urban environment. Firstly, Larkin's choice of vocabulary is very select – the city is described as being "fishy-smelling", which shows the narrator's rather less-than-favourable attitude to the city. There are also devices used within the rhythm to suggest that Larkin feels little fondness towards the city. During descriptions of the city, short-syllable sounds are found in abundance, such as "the dead straight miles", giving an aggressive sound to the phrases, as well as arguably rushing the poem, perhaps as if the narrator is trying to hurry through the description on the city and move into something more pleasant. The narrator's pessimism and pedantic nature are also clear in such phrases as "fields/Too thin and thistled to be called meadows" when describing the city's suburbs, as if to suggest that not even living slightly away from the city is enough to even be compared to the rural utopia.

Rhythmically, the rural environment is also beautified in such descriptions as "the widening river's slow presence", which contains far longer words, slower and more difficult in their pronunciation, as if the narrator is taking his time to savour and enjoy thinking about and describing the countryside. There is also the use of sibilance seen earlier to give a softer aura to the lines describing the countryside, whilst in the description of the city, Larkin uses aggressive plosive sounds such as "cranes cluster", giving a less favourable aggressive sound to make the city seem unappealing, as

well as selecting the word “cluster”, providing the reader with a clearer image of the lack of personal space the narrator associates with urban life.

Within the narrator’s unfavourable description of the city comes his attack on consumerism. Larkin was known to hate consumerism, deeming a life chasing material objects and spending money far too meaningless. The narrator is seen to insult consumers in the city by grouping them all into a “cut-price crowd”, accusing the average consumer of being cheap in their pursuit of inexpensive consumer items. Within the aforementioned phrase, the generalisation of people throughout the city under the same stereotype could reflect loss of individuality through conforming to the same routine consumer lifestyle witnessed from the train window. Using the adjective “cut-price” to describe people is fairly de-humanising and insulting, as if the narrator feels that these people are lesser human beings than him, perhaps incomplete, due to the emptiness of consumerism stopping people finding more meaningful things to base their lives around. Of course in his descriptions the narrator has been biased; but, through use of hyperbole, the gulf between urban and rural life is made inescapably clear.

The poem reaches its conclusion with the narrator’s thoughts drifting back to the countryside. The last stanza features the word “here” for the first time since the title: in the phrase “here is unfenced existence”. This suggests that it is in rural life that true liberation from the pressures and stresses of the city can be found, as well as freedom from the consumerism present in the mindset of its inhabitants. This is the justification behind the selection of such a title; Larkin, using the idea of the constantly changing “here” in the narrative and introducing different places before reaching the conclusion that “here”, at the end of the poem, is the final, perfect place to live. Yet the poem’s final phrase, “out of reach”, does seem to contradict this, suddenly ending the poem on perhaps an anticlimax. One could argue that Larkin means that such an “unfenced existence” is beyond the grasp of the everyday consumer who is stuck in the cycle of urban life, and, being in such an existence, is unable to achieve complete solitude and the spiritual wellbeing as results. However, the presence of the line “luminously-peopled air ascends” could suggest that the perfect life is completely out of reach from human society. The aforementioned line could be a cryptic reference to heaven and spirituality, particularly noticeable in the intentionally ambiguous “luminously peopled”, which Larkin could have chosen to develop as image of angels. So, in fact, ironically, rather than being “here”, as the poem’s title suggests, the perfect life might always ‘over there’, leaving the reader on a profoundly disappointing and bleak note.

From whichever interpretation of the ending the reader finishes reading the poem, it is clear that through both the physical and metaphorical journeys in the poem, Larkin makes his criticism of consumerism and urban lifestyle known. It is fair to say, however, that the true skill and beauty of Larkin’s craft is best seen in the way that perhaps the most meaningful part of the poem, incorporating the subtext of questionable existence of a life resembling perfection being attainable in modern society, is left vague, enabling the poem to create a unique impact upon each person that read it.

Task 2: “Interpretation of sexuality and the exploration of gender roles are an intrinsic element of *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin*”. Discuss the portrayal of men in the novel and in *Dispatches*.

Masculinity is a fundamental component of society, and its universality, contradicted by its need to be defined by individual culture, makes its exploration an intriguing component of literature. Since, as sociologist R. W. Connell observes, masculinity is “socially constructed”¹, the interpretation of masculinity in the novel will be received in a different way for each reader, according to such parameters as their society and their pre-formed opinions on the subject. One can therefore presuppose that the war texts *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* and *Dispatches*, which portray man in

¹ Connell, R. W., *Masculinities*, Polity Press, 1995, Oxford, p5

isolation and immersed in a traumatic environment, will provide a wide range of opportunities for masculinity to be explored, the interpretation of which varying between each individual reading.

Revolutionary psychologist Sigmund Freud, who carried out “the first sustained attempt to build a scientific account of masculinity”², developed the idea that “masculine and feminine currents coexisted in everyone”³, and that a complicated and impure mix of masculine and feminine traits supporting and contradicting each other in a complex structure formed the basis of personality. At this point, it is worth clarifying the ideas of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’, and what fundamental aspects that determine into which an individual is categorised. A universal ‘masculine’ set of characteristics is difficult to establish due to masculinity being socially constructed and “constituted in discourse”⁴. Since both texts, however, are from western cultures, the typical western view of masculinity can be considered, which is easier to generalise. Stereotypically, western society dictates that qualities such as bravery, physical strength and aggression are associated with masculinity, whilst submission, passion, love and passivity are typically more prominent in femininity. If, in accordance with Freud, a personality comprises of both masculine and feminine traits, the idea of a stereotypical masculine man simply necessitates an appropriate accentuation or repression of such traits.

Patriarchal society and the masculine’s dominance over the feminine have led to the development of sex roles within society. According to R. W. Connell, “being a man or a woman mans enacting a *general* set of expectations which are attached to one’s sex”, and “sex roles are seen as the cultural elaboration of biological sex differences”⁵. This means that, fundamentally, sex roles are defined as acting in accordance with a stereotype associated with gender, and are a creation of society, therefore once again being subjective and prone to variation. Gender roles can be specific to the wartime environment, according to historian Joanna Bourke, “the characteristic act of men at war is not dying, it is killing”⁶, yet Bourke’s interpretation of sex roles is not unique, and subjectively on the matter is exploited by both authors in their respective texts. Captain Corelli’s Mandolin, the product of the mind of Louis de Bernières, portrayed a fictional representation of sexuality and gender roles, manipulated in order to convey his message as a postmodernist writer. This is the first contrast to Herr’s Dispatches – a selection of memoirs based on real people designed to convey the war in a manner to separate fact from fiction, and provide the truth to contemporary readers of American magazine *Esquire*, for whom Herr was a correspondent.

One observes that men have both masculine and feminine aspects to their character, and several of the male characters in *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin*, in accordance with Freud’s work, appear to conform to that theory. The phrase, “In him we found combined the softness of a maiden and the massive strength of a rock, the perfect figure of the perfect man” reflects how Carlo, one of the novel’s heroes, carries coexisting traits within his personality. In portraying his protagonist in this way, and indeed many of the other of the novel’s characters, Louis de Bernières is able to construct more human characters. According to literary critics Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, “To be life like, a fictional character should have a number of different traits... which may be conflicting or contradictory”⁷. In presenting the heroes of the novel with conflicting masculine and feminine traits, de Bernières therefore constructs “round”⁸ characters, in accordance with the theories of critic and novelist E. M. Forster.

In *Dispatches*, Micheal Herr also manipulates the theory of coexisting traits within a personality. Throughout the text characters remain anonymous and exhibit uniformity in their behaviour, mirrored in the Germans portrayal in *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* in having an “irrational and irritating uniformity of views and conversation”. Herr portrays a majority of “flat” characters, who, according to E. M. Forster, “can be expressed in one sentence”⁹. There are several instances of

² Connell, R. W., *Masculinities*, Polity Press, 1995, Oxford, p8

³ Connell, R. W., *Masculinities*, Polity Press, 1995, Oxford, p9+10

⁴ Connell, R. W., *Masculinities*, Polity Press, 1995, Oxford, p5

⁵ Connell, R. W., *Masculinities*, Polity Press, 1995, Oxford, p22

⁶ Bourke, J., *An Intimate History of Killing*, Granta Books, London, 2000, P1

⁷ Bennett, A, Royle, N, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, Prentice Hall, Hertfordshire, 1999, 2nd edition.

⁸ Forster, E. M., *Aspects of the Novel*, Penguin Books, London, 2005, 6th Edition

⁹ Forster, E. M., *Aspects of the Novel*, Penguin Books, London, 2005, 6th Edition

conformity to this theory, in single-sentence descriptions as “a dude who’d shot his wad”. However, contradictions are also presented, in ambiguous phrases such as “only heavy killing could make them feel so alive”. Although it uses hyperbole to convey uniformity in behaviour, and a cynical tone to be critical of the men’s taking pleasure from the killing of others, the juxtaposition of “killing” and “alive” suggests a contradiction within the character portrayed, which could be reflecting the contradictions necessary in the successful formation of “round”¹⁰ characters. This is also seen in the 4th Division Lurp, an intimidating and authoritative character whose masculine image is undermined in his wearing of “a gold earring and headband”. Presenting the Lurp in this way amidst a group of masculine conformity is effective because it makes him stand out from the crowd. Exhibiting a prominent feminine trait could represent Lurp’s individual interpretation of sexuality, in that to him the masculinity to which he wishes to conform perhaps features the outward coexistence of masculine and feminine traits. This, therefore, could be a reflection of the subjectivity of masculinity, and how it is fundamentally based on individual interpretation.

Both Captain Corelli’s *Madolin* and *Dispatches* are set in a highly patriarchal society – the absence of women in a war-zone makes the environment entirely male-orientated, and one would therefore expect to observe the male personalities described in both texts to exhibit pressure into masculine stereotype expression. In *Dispatches*, Herr does exactly that; the phrase, “I was afraid of looking squeamish,” portrays an imperative to repress femininity. This links to the observation that the soldiers in the text, whilst conforming to the masculine stereotype, are not portrayed as heroes. The phrase, “a fat Marine had been photographed peeing into the locked-open mouth of a decaying Vietnamese corpse,” confirms this. Here Herr’s use of anonymity ensures that the soldiers’ names are not remembered in history, therefore removing the heroism typically bestowed upon soldiers. This indicates Herr’s intentions in his writings – the memoirs featured in *Dispatches* formed the basis of his writing for *Esquire* magazine during the Vietnam War. Herr’s intentions were to convey the realities of the War in such a way as to provide an “understanding of the war like no other source to date.”¹¹ Excluding heroism from the characters portrayed arguably shows an attempt to distinguish fact from fiction on Herr’s behalf in the War’s context. The exploration of sexuality must therefore be an intrinsic element in *Dispatches*, as it allows the author’s message to be conveyed and his intentions behind his writings to be explored.

Similarly, Louis de Bernières, in the writing of *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin*, evidently decided to use the conventional masculine stereotype to different effects. Carlo, for example, is portrayed as a brave warrior, yet has “his own sadness that he didn’t mention”, indicating recognition of emotion and repression of homosexuality which undermine his masculinity, yet despite not epitomising stereotypical masculinity, is described as “the perfect man”. As well as the masculine stereotype, Corelli’s relationship with Pelagia undermines separation between nationalities established by national stereotypes; their romance breaking the boundaries that de Bernières establishes through stereotype. This all leads to de Bernières’ intentions as a 1990s post-modernist author in establishing stereotypes as key elements within a novel, and then defying them, the message conveyed is that stereotypes are unnecessary boundaries between people. It seems that de Bernières, therefore, feels his readers should follow in Carlo’s example – recognising strength in defying stereotypes and belonging “not to their nation but to the world”. Masculinity, explored as a stereotype, is therefore an intrinsic element to *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin*, firstly because it has a strong effect on how the characters are portrayed, and also because its exploration provides an outlet through which de Bernières’ intentions in his writing can be seen.

One also observes that both texts contain frequent references to and exploration of gender roles. In *Dispatches*, the idea of a male sex role as a killer in war is reflected in one soldier’s line, “if we can’t kill these people, what the fuck are we doing here?” supporting Bourke’s belief in killing as a male role whilst highlighting the pointlessness of the war. Herr also uses the theme of a specific ‘role’ within the war-zone, expressed in a sarcastic or cynical tone, in order to convey distaste at killing being the fundamental part of a soldier’s job, as seen in listing “mutilators”, “heavy rapers”, “eye-shooters” and “widow makers” as the ‘jobs’ of soldiers in Vietnam. Both of these instances support Herr’s critical stance on the War, which Herr would have wanted to emphasise in his anti-war writings to the American public during the sixties. However, one must also recognise that the

¹⁰ Forster, E. M., *Aspects of the Novel*, Penguin Books, London, 2005, 6th Edition

¹¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dispatches_\(book\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dispatches_(book)), accessed 16th March 2009.

polarisation of distinct gender roles is undermined by the context of *Dispatches* – it is known that unlike the American army, the Vietcong used women as soldiers as well as men, thus showing that killing is not a role exclusive to men. Herr's decision to include a mention of a female member of the Vietnamese resistance, "a serious tiger lady going around on a Honda shooting American officers", serves as a reflection on how stereotypical gender roles can be defied, whilst a following line, "an awful lot of gun for a itty bitty Vietnamese woman", represents a masculine stubbornness in refusing to acknowledge gender role flexibility.

Gender roles are also broken down in *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, with de Bernières referencing to their polarisation. Gender roles can be seen as an intrinsic element of the novel because of how they relate to many characters. Mandras is a character who falls victim to the gender role stereotype: his suggestion that, "no man is a man until he has been a soldier," implies his susceptibility to the stereotypical gender roles of society, which implies that gender roles are dictated by society in the same way as masculine stereotypes. Carl, conversely, is a character whose personality contradicts the ideas of Mandras and Bourke – Corelli's proudly approving comment, "He has a hundred medals for saving life, and none for taking it," suggests heroism in good morals over masculinity. Carlo's heroism and Mandras' demise both undermine traditional gender role belief, providing depth to the characters whilst simultaneously conveying de Bernières' postmodernist message in the futility of man-made separations within society. Mixing gender roles could also serve to undermine the wartime belief surrounding conscientious objectors. Men who refused to fight during the Second World War upon moral grounds were often mistreated, accused of cowardice and imprisoned for not fulfilling their *role* as men. In portraying his protagonists defying gender roles, de Bernières could be professing a tolerance towards men with moral integrity, and supporting John F Kennedy's belief that, "War will exist until the distant day when the conscientious objector enjoys the same reputation and prestige as the warrior does today."¹²

In all, it can be observed that sexuality and gender roles are intrinsic elements of both texts, as seen in how they affect the majority of characters, and in the frequency of sub-textual insinuations. The themes of gender role exploration and sexuality serve a purpose in understanding the texts and their authors' intentions – one observes that sexuality stereotypes are featured in order to criticise humanity's self separation and conformity to stereotypes in *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, whilst the presence of separate traits in the characters allows comments to be made on how gender roles are not as inflexible as many would suggest. The exploration of these themes also has a major effect on the presentation of characters in both texts, determining their 'roundness' and hence the reader's perspective on them. With characterisation, plot and message of both texts fundamentally dependent on these aforementioned explored ideas and themes, it can therefore be concluded that sexuality and gender roles are of the utmost importance in both texts.

Commentary

The writing on Larkin illuminates the poem "Here" and is eloquent (AO1) showing consistently effective use of blended quotations and insight into a range of form, structure and language aspects (AO2). The first paragraph provides an effective introduction and hints at a structural understanding of the poem that could be made more explicit. The main problem is that the task is an instruction which does not invite an argument and the poem is not related to *The Whitsun Weddings* as a whole. The mark scheme does not have full text hurdles, but it is a reading requirement that a full text is studied so it is eminently sensible for Centres to construct assignment titles that invite candidates to contextualise the stimulus for their close reading within a whole text understanding by their choice of tasks. It has been recommended at INSET that answers also have an "angle" or shaped response to a provocation or task. This is a high Band 5 mark, albeit not the highest.

The Linked Texts piece here is striking and informed by impressive research. However, it takes a

¹² <http://nytimes.com/2007/08/26/magazine/26ww1n-safire-t.html> accessed 19th March 2009

good while to settle down as a literary discussion, unfortunately having too much contextual material (AO4) at the start of the essay. The writing is vigorous and intelligent (AO1), but also quite manipulative: in the sixth paragraph being squeamish become synonymous with femininity which is definitely special pleading and at the end of the paragraph there is a concluding comment which sounds final but has not really been explored. The paragraph also is not as sophisticated in construction as some of the others, too: “This indicates Herr’s intentions in his writings – the memoirs featured in *Dispatches* formed the basis of his writing for *Esquire* magazine during the Vietnam War. Herr’s intentions were to convey the realities of the War in such a way as to provide an ‘understanding of the war like no other source to date’”. The main cause for concern, however, is that the exploration of the task, except at a few key points, is not convincingly comparative: texts are given separate paragraphs and sections, which fact prevents meaningful links being made between the two texts (AO3). At the end there is no real conclusion offered to the discussion that marries up the two texts (an AO1 weakness) and ultimately one has to ask whether *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* has been thoroughly investigated in terms of this question. The material on *Dispatches*, however, is strong and the use of this text demonstrates how some Centres have started to move out of a text choice comfort zone, which is good for the future of English Literature. For all its fluency, this essay is not worthy of the highest mark in Band 5. The lower end of the Band would seem more reasonable given its assessment objective deficits.

Overall, this is a very worthy folder that would definitely have been capable of more marks If the Centre had kept a closer eye on task-setting for Item 1 and thought harder how to embed AO4 and to achieve effective address to both aspects of AO3. Offered at the top of Band 5, this folder is better placed towards the bottom, which seems like a punitive reduction, but, as a whole, it does demonstrate the need for tighter adherence to the guidelines offered in the specification and at INSET sessions.

5 Candidate C

Task 1: Saturday creative writing coursework

In a stupor, Henry is fixed to the spot, as if it was he, not Baxter, who has been paralyzed by the fall. The sound of bone against wall, skull against stone repeats over and over in his head so that the traffic passing and movement out in the square, entirely oblivious to what has happened in the Perowne household, fails to penetrate his awareness. It is only the hushed sound of frantic yet tentative conversation between those he loves so dearly, drifting from the sitting room that draws Henry out of this strange, dreamlike trance. He is not sure he is ready to see the rest of the family yet, as so unfamiliar is this situation that he wants, needs, a little time to adjust. His thoughts turn to memories, which resurface subconsciously. When Theo and Daisy were younger, at that blissful age in which they were both fascinated by what directly surrounded them, and didn't feel any need to discover, or weren't even aware of the world outside, Rosalind continually fretted over those steps, the dark, smooth and uncompromisingly solid surface deemed to be a potential danger. It was unlike their mother to be so anxious over something like this, generally taking the stance that overprotective parents did in fact do more harm than good, but after overhearing a rather gruesome story at the school gates even Henry had to admit that the sound of the children dashing up and down the stairs, immersed in whatever fantasy Daisy had concocted, made him somewhat uneasy. But the children had inevitably grown older, no longer interested in imaginary play, and the steps ceased to be a concern.

He moves towards Baxter, urgent in his pace now, as it occurs to him that any injuries could be critical and may need immediate attention, wondering whether, if he had known someday this otherworldly scene would come about, would he have done things differently. Certainly, the sight and sound of Baxter's shattered skull would not have been so extreme, not such a perturbing image, if Henry had decided to carpet the stairs. However, there is a small part of him which finds comfort in the gravity of the fall, the knowledge that Baxter will not be able to rise on his own for a long while, and that his family is now safe. As Perowne manoeuvres himself gingerly over Baxter's diagonally aslant limbs, awkwardly sprawled across the stone, he pauses to examine the point of connection between the floor and Baxter's skull. So severe was the fall that even now Henry can clearly see a depressed fracture, and he worries about its proximity to the superior sagittal sinus .

Analysis

For my creative writing piece I decided to carry on from the culmination of Baxter's break-in to the Perowne family home. McEwan's narrative breaks off at the point where Baxter reaches the bottom of the stairs and then picks up again after the authorities have left. I felt that there was room here to address the gap in between, combining some of McEwan's major stylistic features. The novel's time frame is over one Saturday which is notable because of the march, which although it has little impact on Henry, its indirect consequences on his life are huge. This encompasses the idea that whilst everything has changed for Henry, people everywhere are going about their daily lives, untouched by the consequences of the march. McEwan's narrative style gives a strong focus on Perowne's family and career, which are recurrent themes in 'Saturday', with detailed insights into relationships through flashbacks which develop into further sections of narrative.

Perowne's tendency to look to the past no matter how serious the present situation is something I included because it is so characteristic of how McEwan portrays his personality, and emphasises the idea that although it is written in the third person, it is as if the narrator is directly translating the emotions of Perowne into words. Although McEwan writes in the present, we get a strong sense of the background of the Perowne family as a result of the frequent flashbacks. He often uses these diversions to create further character background at an unusual time in the novel, where action is prevalent. It emphasises how important family is to the career-focused Perowne, which is why I chose to include a recollection of Theo and Daisy as children. Looking at McEwan's representation of Perowne's personality it is clear that he likes everything to be in order and has to follow his routine, which is why I have written about how Perowne is finding the situation hard to adjust to. In the end, Perowne always turns to his extensive medical knowledge to process the situation, as it is the only thing he truly knows.

Complex sentences broken up by commas are a recurring element in McEwan's writing, and I included this in my writing because it is one of the ways in which McEwan typically conveys the voice and thoughts of Perowne through a third person narrative. It reflects the twists and turns of Perowne's thought pattern, and shows the sleight of hand with which McEwan slips between the narrator and what seems to be the first person. The knowledge of the narrator is so acute that it feels like it must have come directly from the mind of Perowne. In my passage I have used many clauses to include the detailed information which is so characteristic of the aspect of Perowne's personality which dissects each moment, as has been described to us throughout *Saturday*.

Although McEwan's writing is complex and sophisticated in style, the actual language that he uses is uncomplicated. The vocabulary is selected very carefully, which is why I spent a lot of time deciding why certain words would fit better than others. At the end of my writing I have included some medical terminology. McEwan often includes medical jargon which is extremely unfamiliar to the average reader, but that does not affect how we read *Saturday*, as we do not need the definition of every medical term in order to understand the meaning behind them and what they are trying to convey. The words come soon after or before mentions of Perowne's family, highlighting the contrast between Perowne's two separate worlds of love and science. These words are important because they reveal Perowne's character; his obsession with his job, his need for control and his diagnostic personality.

Task 2: 'Post-colonial literature is generally defined as that which critically or subversively scrutinizes the colonial relationship.'
Compare and contrast the ways in which *Small Island* and *Translations* present the relationship between colonisers and the colonised.

Brian Friel's *Translations* is primarily concerned with conveying how the colonial relationship affected the native Irish language and culture, but it also comments on the emotions and situation of the colonisers as well, whilst neither judges the relationship.

'*Small Island*', by Andrea Levy, mainly deals with the struggles of the colonised Jamaicans, as individuals, which relates to Levy's own search for identity, integrating themselves in England and contradicting the stereotypical views of both the Jamaicans and the English. Whilst Levy has become more sympathetic towards the colonised in her own struggles, saying of the black British culture that 'we're going to have to fight our way into the canon,'¹ both texts address aspects of the colonial relationship, combining personal encounters with historical facts to reveal how complex the situation was and continues to be. 'Reconstructing the past in this way usually heralds the emergence of new voices and new tools for understanding the past,'² and this is what Levy and

¹ Andrea Levy in conversation with Susan Alice Fischer, *Changing English*

² *Post-Colonial Drama*, Helen Griffiths and J. Tompkins

Freil have effectively conveyed, through different mediums, by showing both sides of the story. 'Translations' was written as a play with the intention of being performed by the Field Day Company, and contained the idea of bringing the Unionists and the Nationalists together to improve the situation.

'Translations' has been defined as 'not just a lamentation on the loss of the Irish language, but a play about the conditions under which the survival of an entire culture might be possible and under which love and loyalty might be renewed.'³ Freil's purpose in writing is to show a way forward, and similarly Levy's message shows that the situation is a journey to be travelled to find a better future for the colonial relationship. Bonnie Greer in her review of 'Small Island' writes that the book chronicles a 'British black woman's journey towards herself, in a land that does not always acknowledge her existence,'⁴ and both 'Translations' and 'Small Island' depict the progress of the colonisers and the colonised. As well as this they show how Britain today has been shaped by immigration, which has now become an integral part of our own culture. It is the essence of this that shows the texts to be positive, with the final outcome being one of hope for the multi cultural future.

To reinforce this possibility of hope in the colonial relationship, 'Small Island' and 'Translations' use characterization to contrast the positive with the negative aspects of the relationship. They show the problems, sometimes subversively, but underneath the main themes are positive. Both capture the ignorant and offensive attitude of the English towards their empire countries, with 'Small Island' highlighting the feeling of superiority of the working class over the race of Africa in the Empire through the Prologue, with the actions of Queenie and her party. Graham, a farm helper, declares that the African natives are 'not civilised. They only understand drums.' 'Translations' uses the pompous character of Lancey, who 'speaks as if he were addressing children - a shade too loudly and enunciating excessively,' to do the equivalent. Stereotypical tendencies perceived by all races are a major issue, with some characters almost creating a deceptive relationship with England, Ireland or Jamaica before they have come into any direct contact with it. The colonised believe that they will have a strong and fruitful relationship with England, but this is proved false when true intentions, namely wanting the Jamaicans for their manpower but rejecting them from the English culture, are revealed. This is shown by the great hope and ambition of the Jamaicans surrounding the prospect of England, whereas on arrival, Gilbert describes the mother country as 'a filthy tramp.' The Empire Exhibition is described by the King as 'the whole Empire in little,' when it is entirely impossible to include every unique aspect of each country in one building. The idea is also reflected in 'Translations', as Lancey says that a map, a 'paper picture,' is 'showing [Ireland] in miniature.'

The texts display the dramatic representation of the effect on personal appearance following contact with the colonisers or colonised. This is done visually in 'Translations', which takes the form of a play, and through the words and personal emotions of the characters in 'Small Island'. For example, Maire's transformation from a 'strong-minded, strong-bodied woman' to being in 'acute distress, on the verge of being distraught' after the disappearance of Yolland, and Queenie's 'pretty as a doll' features and breezy but bold tone change so that she is then described as 'dowdy' and 'a busybody woman' after the war. Levy shows us post-war England on its knees, with its inhabitants struggling to live ordinary lives. Bernard, who returns from India to be faced with a house full of 'brown gadabouts' and a wife pregnant with another black man's child, finds that 'everything about this dreadful homecoming was awry... I felt I'd stumbled into someone else's existence by mistake and was now busy trying to find my part.' This is a major way in which the texts differ as their form means that the effect of colonisation represented through character's appearances are shown differently. As 'Translations' is a play, we actually see the change, and the dramatic difference is emphasised as it takes place over such a short amount of time, whereas in 'Small Island' it is through the voices of the characters, of which there is a balance of black and white, and the shifts in time that we can understand how events have changed them over a certain period of time. A theme of communication incorporated in the texts with both positive and negative connotations is that they both suggest that although romantic or platonic relationships are possible between the colonisers and the colonised, but progress cannot always be straightforward and easy initially.

³ The English Review – Stephen Regan

⁴ The Guardian

Instead, what these breakthroughs provide are steps towards the bigger picture. Pamela Bickley says that the relationship between the " colonisers and the colonised is one 'which results in betrayals and disappointments.'⁵ Although this does appear true at times, with the tragic death of Yolland as a result of 'forbidden interaction, but it is not what Levy and Freil are trying to convey. The implications behind the texts are not subversive. The relationships are used metaphorically by the authors to represent the crossing of cultural boundaries. It is this great hope that, although it has not worked out this time, shows the chance and the possibility for a multi cultural future.

Thematically, linked to the crossing of boundaries and adapting, both texts include the perception that English is the only language that will enable the speaker to advance. The majority of colonised characters show this, but there are exceptions which help us to realise the effect this can have on culture and language. 'Small Island' and 'Translations' show this through both language and characterization. Both authors do not present this necessarily sceptically, as they acknowledge that it is necessary for a country to adapt in some cases to advance in the modern world. It is presented by the Jamaicans who have a desperate ambition, because of the promises surrounding it, to learn English, and by Maire who determines the necessity to be taught English at the traditional Irish Hedge School. Edmund Spenser said 'it hath ever been the use of the conqueror to despise the language of the conquered, and to force him by all means to learn his,'⁶ and this is proved true by Lancey who refuses to have any involvement with retaining the Irish language, instead he willingly obeys orders to destroy place names, and consequently the cultural identity. In 'Translations' we see the Irish forced to let go of their language, whilst in Small Island, although Levy has acknowledged that 'unlike Africa and India, the Caribbean was settled,' the Jamaicans show a great ambition to learn English to further themselves, as without knowledge of this language all sorts of problems and complications prevail.

A way that the colonisers and the colonised can overcome their language barrier is through translation, although sometimes this can have even more disastrous consequences. Freil uses the character of Owen as a display of this, whilst Levy focuses more on the language of both English and Jamaicans in her writing to show how it differs and that sometimes things can be lost in translation. She uses humour too to prevent the novel from appearing as a long tirade. In 'Translations', Freil uses Hiberno English to involve the audience in the theatrical conceit that Irish is being spoken. It emphasises how they cannot understand one another at times and highlights the huge contrast between English and Irish in terms of culture and language. The name-book, process of naming and etymology of words are what roots a language in culture and it is ironic that Maire and Yolland, a coloniser, communicate through place names when this is exactly what the colonisers are trying to destroy. Freil shows the culture of the Irish through language in dialogue, whilst Levy does so through the separate voices of characters as narrator. She is a strong auditory writer, which enables her to give her characters clear and defined voices with their own identities.

Language affects everything in our lives, including relationships, lifestyle and emotions, and this is what R.D. Laing calls 'experience.' Following this idea, in order to control the entirety of the colonised, the colonisers need to get rid of their language and so destroy their 'experience.' Laing states that 'if our experience is destroyed, our behaviour will be destructive,'⁷ and this is proved by several characters in 'Small Island' and 'Translations'. 'Translations' and 'Small Island' channel the idea that language is a force, as it causes resistance and deep, passionate anger when it is threatened because it is the identity of a person or place. At times both authors take away the language of a character to show what the colonial relationship has reduced them to. In 'Translations', Sarah, as a dramatic metaphor for the diminishing voice of Ireland, continually indicates her needs through hand gestures, and this is what becomes of Hortense in 'Small Island'. The importance of the concept of language is immediately demonstrated in 'Translations' by Hugh, with his constant demand for the translation and origin of words. Salman Rushdie said that 'English, no longer an English language, now grows from many roots,'⁸ and although these roots are incredibly important, they have been forgotten by the English in the texts. The character of Lancey in 'Translations' has misunderstood what language is and does not see the importance of

⁵ Post-colonial novels, post-colonial readings

⁶ A View of the Present State of Ireland, 1596

⁷ The Politics of Experience, 1967

⁸ 'The Empire writes back, with a vengeance,' The Times, 3rd July 1982

the dead languages that have shaped English, as it defies the idea of English as superior. Contrastingly, Jimmy Jack is locked in a world of the classical language, and it is lonely for him because he cannot interact freely. What he truly wants, he says, is 'companionship, company, someone to talk to. Away up in Beann na Gaoithe - you've no idea how lonely it is.' This is also to do with the subjugation of people, as Latin and Ancient Greek disintegrated just as Irish will do. Freil and Levy are trying to convey the need to have balance and compromise from both sides in the colonial relationship, as the Irish can learn from the English to progress, whilst they should be able to retain their culture, as E. Estyn Evans said 'The essence of Irishness is the process of renewal under the stimulus of culture-contact.' However, 'when attitudes harden under political. .. pressures and become fossilized... the genuine quality of Irishness is sacrificed.'⁹

Levy and Friel use the structure of their writing to effectively convey the evolving relationship of the colonisers and the colonised over time. Friel looks at the community as a whole, whilst Levy focuses on the smaller details of individuals for a personal effect. 'Translations' is a three-act play consisting of the stages 'gathering, interaction and disintegration,' and this progression from assemblage to scattering visually represents the deterioration in the community. Friel creates a tableau at the end of each act that foreshadows what is to come. This echoes his representation of the community of Ireland as a whole, as does all aspects of the structure of a play enables Friel to be entirely representative, from the set, which is falling apart like Ireland, to the costumes, which are the contrasting colours of red, for England, and green, for traditional Ireland. Through dialogue and interspersed stage directions, Donald Gilpin says that 'these engaging characters, their passionate relationships and their compelling stories are at once deeply embedded in a particular time and place yet also thoroughly universal and timely.'¹⁰ It is the lack of our knowledge about the characters past, unlike in 'Small Island', that makes the play unrestricted to their individual situations. 'Translations' is visually very striking, but we are not given the view of the community, instead we get its sense of spirit through the almost comical pair of Bridget and Doalty as commentators on the community outside. In 'Small Island' it is seen firsthand. Levy shows the actions and views of the communities through the four voices in different timeframes, of 'before' as the past and '1948' as the present, to explain reactions. 'We cannot understand our future without understanding our past,'¹¹ so by moving back and forth, Levy has enabled us to see what happens to the individuals, giving us a better understanding of the colonial relationship.

Through the techniques of structure, language and characterization, 'Small Island' and 'Translations' present the positive and negative aspects of the colonial relationship. The situation is typically a tragic and distressing one for most involved, and while Levy and Friel convey this it is not what they want to present the relationship as a whole to be. They are interested in the hope and aspirations for a better future, without the deep-rooted hostility and sense of injustice which is present and felt personally by both of them. Levy says that although her novels 'are not autobiographical they have all been about exploring what it means to be black and British,'¹² which explains her focus on a more individual level, whilst 'Translations' looks at the linguistic, social, political and cultural processes of the countries as one. They both explore the present, cultural identities and colonial contact through the impact of past events, with bleak consequences evolving into improving prospects for the post-colonial situation.

⁹ 1968 speech to the Irish association for Cultural, Economic and Social Relations

¹⁰ 'Irish politics, Education, Place Names, Love and Language Take Centre Stage in Brian Friel's 'Translations' at McCarter'

¹¹ English Review

¹² 'Speaking in Tongues' – Ms Sheree Mack

Commentary

The re-creative piece works well and is of an appropriate length. It is accurately conveyed and credible (AO1). The decision to plug a narrative gap was well-chosen. The commentary explains the candidate's intentions and then writes substantially about flashbacks and character insight. From structure, the candidate moves to sentence construction as an aspect of form and follows this up with a paragraph on medical language (AO2). Some of this material is a little generalised and there could be greater use of quotation for exemplification. The times that the wider novel is referred to would benefit from specific textual instances being cited. The commentary as a whole is not particularly well-shaped; it ends with a character statement, but began with plot and situation. The top of Band 5 is too high here: the top of Band 4 is much more reasonable.

The Linked Texts piece is excellent; it is comparative throughout (AO3) and makes use of other readings of the two texts under discussion (Stephen Regan, Bonnie Greer, Donald Gilpin). There is real range in the contextual elements of the essay which cover, among other things, a range of cultural commentators, insight into form/genre, social and historical details at the time of composition. Throughout it is highly readable and clear (AO1). It would be churlish to deny this being at the top of Band 5.

Overall, this is secure work from a Centre tackling an interesting range of texts and projects. However, the re-creative work needs more detail and development.

6 Candidate D

Task 1: History Boys - re-creative writing – Dakin's Oxford Interview

It's a sunny day out, filled with piercing silence as Dakin makes his way towards St Edmund College for his interview. He looks around at the grand building, with impressive architectures and the fresh cut grass, were so many nervous students have walked before him.

Dakin smiles as he enters the building, already imagining himself creating memories there. He takes a deep breath and enters the interview where a strange man, sitting at an antique desk in the corner of the room welcomes him smiling.

Oxford Don: 'Please take a seat, Dakin'

Oxford Don: 'Tell me, why have you singled out St Edmund from other respectable colleges?'

Dakin: 'I could say it was its spectacular architecture, or the many luminated poetic minds that have crossed St Edmunds path, but that will imply I'm insincere. I had visited a range of wonderful colleges all very impressive; however only from here I got the feeling.'

Oxford Don looks down and starts writing on a pad of paper then looks up.

Oxford Don: 'I'm sorry Dakin, "the feeling"?''

Dakin: 'Yes, the feeling, you could call it gut feeling or instinct, whichever, it purely felt as if I belong here not anywhere else.'

Dakin relaxes in his chair.

Oxford Don: 'Interesting, now Dakin if you had the opportunity to chose one person, dead or alive to have dinner with, whom would that person be?'

Dakin looks a bit taken back and thinks for a second.

Dakin: 'I would have to say Hitler, Sir.'

Oxford Don: 'Would you care to elaborate why?'

Dakin: 'Sir, I believe Hitler was misunderstood. I also believe he was in fact forced by circumstances to become a bloodthirsty machine. Who knows? He could have been neglected or abused during his early years. I think he was; he hated his own father you see Sir, as Freud would explain Hitler suffered from Oedipus complex and an abusive alcoholic father.'

Dakin looks nervous at the Don but carries on explaining.

Dakin: 'Now, my guess is Hitler grew up tremendously unhappy, repressing all this horrific feelings and when at last he became powerful unleashed them on the poor Jews. This is the true reason behind the massacre and terror of the Holocaust. However sad this story seems it does not put him in a better light nor does it make him admirable.'

Oxford Don looks surprised as he starts to write drastically to keep up.

Oxford Don: 'That is a daring opinion. I would be interested in knowing whom you admire and why?'

Dakin smiles.

Dakin: 'Whom I admire? A lot of people, people that have left prints in today's history, the brave soldiers that risked their life for England, excluding Wilfred Owen if I may. However, the person one admires the most is Hector, my teacher. He opened my mind to literature, music, French plays, all with his eccentric views and style. Is he, Hector, a brilliant, supportive teacher that goes out of his way to help us...

Oxford Don: Yes, yes I'm sure he does now...

Dakin ignores the Don and finishes his answer.

Dakin: Sir, he even offers to give us rides home all for the mere enjoyment of an opportunity to...help us individually as much as he can...

Oxford Don seems unimpressed by this answer

Oxford Don: 'Hmmm. Mr Dakin I'm afraid to say your time is up, one hopes you enjoyed the magnificent sights of Oxford University.'

Dakin gets up and shakes Oxford Don's hand.

Dakin: 'Thank you for your time, Sir.'

Dakin gives him a smirk and walks out.

Commentary

For my original writing piece, I chose Dakin's Oxford University interview, after taking the exams, as the time and setting. The fact that this is not a rewrite of an actual scene from the original play gave me the chance to be as creative as I wanted to.

I found it imperative to include an intro paragraph that briefly explains the setting and possibly create the image at the start, before Dakin and the Oxford Don engage in conversation.

Ultimately, I desired my piece to be similar to Alan Bennett's style, to create a sense of familiarity and naturalness, as if Bennett wrote it himself. Doing so would create a better vivid image in the readers head and make it simpler to comprehend. To do so, I tried to use familiar language. Dakin is once again speaking formally, presenting outcast thoughts and ideas, making him sound very articulate and intelligent. For instance, the whole idea of 'Hitler being misunderstood' is something I personally could see Dakin believing in.

I particularly chose Dakin because in the play he struck me as the most captivating character. He is intelligent, witty, with a healthy sense of humour, most of the time his lines containing a double meaning, I imagined that Dakin's interview will be bound to be the most interesting one, somehow bizarre. This occurred to me in reference to Dakin's behaviour towards Irwin and mostly Hector.

I created the Don Oxford on one of Hector's personality trait: eccentricity. It occurred to me that if Hector would have been by miracle, an Oxford Don interviewing Dakin, the questions ask would be daring and bizarre, asked as if to secretly test Dakin.

In conclusion, it is fair to add that the scene is short, but it is understandable as these interviews would probably not be long anyway as the Oxford Don will have to sit down with more students later on (or sat with other before) and cannot go on for ages and ages. Hopefully the reader will get a familiar feeling to Alan Bennett's work while reading this scene that will make it more powerful and more effective.

Task 2: Death and Rebirth

In 'Girl Interrupted: Susanna Kaysen is sent to McLean Hospital in 1967 to undergo treatment for borderline personality disorder following a suicide attempt. Similarly, in 'The Bell Jar: Sylvia Plath's semi-autobiographical character Esther is admitted to a New York institution as well as McLean Hospital after attempting suicide. Here she is given shock treatment. Whereas 'The Bell Jar' is a retrospective novelistic interpretation of Plath's experiences, Kaysen's 'Girl, Interrupted' is a memoir based on writings undertaken during her stay at McLean Hospital. Through both plot and symbolism, both 'Girl, Interrupted' and 'The Bell Jar' explore the theme of death and rebirth.

Both Kaysen and Esther consider the option of ending their lives in response to what each of them perceives as an unliveable situation, based on the conflict between their autonomous desires and society's demands. However, whereas Esther swallows sleeping pills and hides without telling anyone, suggesting that her desire for death is definite and unambiguous, before chasing a bottle of aspirin with vodka, Kaysen informs her boyfriend of her intentions, which suggests ambivalence in her attitude to committing suicide. This uncertainty is reinforced when Kaysen confesses that her attempted suicide was only "half-hearted." In contrast with those of Polly, another inmate at the hospital, who sets herself on fire, her feelings about ending her life are not resolute, as she recognizes Kaysen highlights this contrast by recalling how "[she] had an inspiration once. [She] woke up one morning and knew that [she] had to swallow fifty aspirin. But it's not the same as what she did." This reveals her insight and her lack of self-delusion. Moreover, the reference to "an inspiration" implies that the desire arose independently of her will. This theme is developed when Susanna tells us that in order to be successful at committing suicide you "have to get used to it" and "cultivate detachment" by "[practising] imagining yourself dead, or in the process of dying." This implies a degree of resistance to the thought of ending her life, as it suggests a reluctance to carry out the deed. Were her desire to die clear-cut there would be no need to "practise" or "cultivate" the required state of mind. This shows a contrast between Susanna and Esther, implying that Esther's desire to succeed in her suicide attempts is more authentic, as she tries a range of different methods, such as cutting her wrists several times, trying to drown herself, comparing herself to a dead woman, and descending from the top of a mountain in the hope that she will die. Unlike Kaysen, who tries to will a sense of "detachment," Esther says that "[the] thought that I might kill myself formed in my mind coolly as a tree or a flower." This simile reveals that the thought arose spontaneously and naturally, rather than having to be forced into existence. Moreover, Esther describes her sense of release and liberation as she imaginatively fast forwards to her death, revealing how she "aimed straight down. [She] filled [her] lungs with the inrush of scenery- air, mountains, trees, people and she thought 'This is what it is to be happy.'" However, it seems ironic that the images that arise in her consciousness as she envisages severing her links with life are all *connected with* life, even though in an idealized form. This imagery implies an unconscious resistance to death, even though consciously she welcomes it.

Despite the dark and disrupted nature of Susanna and Esther's state of mind, both of them seem to be aiming at killing only the bad in them. This is a reflection of the unrepresentative image that they have been presenting to the world for so long that it has infiltrated their consciousness and the nature of their own self-perception. Esther's sense of conflict and psychic crisis seems to be triggered by her unwillingness to continue to play the limiting and constraining role that she feels the world demands of her, that of the good daughter, the hard working girl and the model student who wins prizes and scholarships and is awarded straight As. Esther's rebellious act of throwing all her clothes from the top of the hotel's roof, "piece by piece, I fed my wardrobe to the night wind," symbolises her urge to attain a sense of purification, a liberation from what society expects of her.

As her "wardrobe" represents the social role she feels has been imposed on her, her act of flinging it away from her to the forces of nature represents her desire for freedom and her urge for rebirth as a more authentic being. As she looks down, she feels as if that Esther is about to be buried an image of death that implies the symbolic desire for rebirth. The sense of jubilation aroused by the thought of the death of her inauthentic self is so intense and all-encompassing that it spills over into her surroundings, as revealed when she says, "At my feet, the city doused its lights in sleep, its buildings blackened as if for a funeral." It seems as if in her fantasy she is willing the world to

acknowledge the birth of her true self, which implies a desire for reconnection with the world. Similarly, Susanna concludes that she did not want to die, but only to kill the part of her which pushed her to suicide: "Actually it was only part of myself I wanted to kill, the part that wanted to kill herself, that dragged me into the debate." This demonstrates that although ostensibly she wished to die, in fact paradoxically she only wanted to shed the aspect of herself that desired annihilation. Therefore her recollection reveals the desire for life.

People often wonder what insanity is and how we know whether we are sane or just pretending to be normal. Susanna also raises this question and finds herself wondering, "Was insanity just a matter of dropping the act?" The nature of her speculations suggests that, were everyone to cease to pretend, everyone might be deemed insane and that sanity is just a matter of conforming to social consensus.

Judged in accordance with the criteria of 1960s conventional social consensus, Susanna and Esther both seem to be deeply disturbed. Neither sees the appeal of a conventional life, for example finding a husband, being a good wife and doing everything in order to please one's husband. Similarly, both of them desire autonomy, wanting to be able to write and be free. Their resistance to conforming to prescribed social roles indirectly leads to their hospitalization. Both 'Girl, Interrupted' and 'The Bell Jar' explore the question of whether the protagonists pay too high a price in their quest for freedom.

Suicide is even now an option for tortured souls searching for freedom. However isn't that the easiest way out and, not only an absurdly selfish option, but also a counter-productive one, since it implies the triumph of constraining social roles? I think Susanna and Esther were pushed to attempt suicide by being denied the freedom to express themselves, articulate and share their problems, be whoever they wanted to be and not have to follow in the footsteps of limiting stereotypes. Susanna and Esther are not born insane; they are pushed by their resistance to social roles into behaviour diagnosed as signifying insanity. Kaysen encapsulates this phenomenon when she says, "It's easy to slip in a parallel universe," implying that once you catch a glimpse of such an alternative existence, it's tempting never to return, for in a parallel universe, a world of the insane, "the laws of physics are suspended, a body at rest does not tend to stay at rest and not every action can be counted on to provoke an equal and opposite reaction." The laws of physics symbolize the laws of society, which she longs to transcend.

Kaysen also feels that mental illness "comes in two basic varieties: slow and fast." Even though fast and slow mental illnesses are different, Kaysen believes that someone outside the realm of insanity would not know the difference as both types freeze up one's reactions, either restraining an individual into inaction or by offering so many choices which require a decision that a kind of paralysis sets in. In Esther's case being presented with the opportunity to spend a month in New York working for a magazine and having to process everything, interpret, associate, observe others and be confronted by so many potential role models, only seems to push her to analyse herself more closely. Therefore she comes to acknowledge what she lacks and what she represents, making her feel different from others and somehow ashamed that she has a different way of looking at the world. The overload of impressions and the psychological reactions they activate make her feel overwhelmed. Possibly, Esther's feelings of emptiness and sense of alienation could also come from a lack of affection allied to unresolved trauma; she makes it crystal clear that she loathes her mother and reveals that she never actually acknowledges the death of her father until late in her adult life when she finally visits his grave. All these factors are bound to have had an impact on her psychological state and might perhaps hold the key to her problem, emptiness.

Being forced or pressurized to adopt an identity that they do not relate to or desire, being propelled against their will along a path that feels alien to them and that, were they free from social constraints, they would certainly have avoided, being denied the liberty to express themselves freely and always having to put on a mask to meet other people's expectations, slowly pushes Kaysen and Esther to a dark place inside their mind, instilling in them the desire to shut down their bodies in order to escape from the dark thoughts. Plath ingeniously evokes the nature of Esther's "illness," her state of mind, by associating it with the image of a bell jar. This imagery suggests that Esther's troubles start in her mind, but are triggered by her circumstances, such as almost being raped by a " - man named Marco, lied to by her first love Buddy, being friendless, being deprived of

affection and being assailed by a welter of options which she is unable to process, causing a sudden crisis stemming from indecision about her future. Esther says that "[to] the person in the bell jar, blank and stopped as a dead baby, the world itself is a bad dream." This simile implies the desire for rebirth and also implies a sense of dissociation from the world, not dissimilar to the state of mind conjured up by Coleridge in his 'Dejection: An Ode: when, having described the stars and the moon, he says, "I see them all so excellently fair. I see not feel how beautiful they are." Esther's image of paralysis and deadlock and the psychological block in relating to and participating in the world make see her madness as a bad dream which could quickly be forgotten if it did not so haunt, shock and frighten her. This implies how limited, limiting and closed minded society was in Esther's time.

However, Esther's latent hope is implied by the fact that it is the world and not herself that she sees as the bad dream. Although both Kaysen and Esther feel trapped, their testimonies imply that there is always a way to re-surface and find our path again, converting death into rebirth.

Furthermore, Susan Cheever, a critic from the New York Times seem to agree that the line between sanity and insanity is dangerously thin '**Susanna Kaysen's story shows how thin the line is between those society deems mad and those it deems sane**' **Susan Cheever, New York Times p3.**

However melodramatic and disturbing Susanna's and Esther's lives have been, they both succeed in renaissance, these experiences helped them transform into their own persona, braking free from society's demands of them. "**Esther does come back to life. Having passed through death, she learns, to forge a new identity.**" **Marjorie G. Perloff**

Sources used: <http://www.sylviaplath.de/plath/perloff.html> ;

<http://www.nytimes.com/1993/06/20/books/a-designated-crazy.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&pagewanted=3>

Commentary

This re-creative piece is stronger than its commentary, but the whole submission leaves a lot to be desired. The scene ends too quickly and the inclusion of Hector as a figure to be admired in the interview does not wholly convince, although the mention of him allows further textual knowledge to be evidenced (AO1). There are errors in script format, basic English (where/were confusion), missing commas. The scene directions are not authentic. It is debatable whether this is securely competent work (Band 3), but the scene is one in which the stakes are high which makes for drama; Dakin comes over as clever and unconventional; and there is a scattergun of knowledge as in the original play.

The short commentary does not really have an AO2 focus and explains composition choices in an uncritical way in writing that is poorly presented and loosely expressed. Some character points are made and there is a quotation. This definitely conforms to Band 2 commentary criteria.

Item 1 as a whole is reduced from Band 5 to Band 2.

Thankfully the Linked Text piece is much better. The Centre/candidate has chosen a profitable pairing of texts and selected useful foci for the discussion. However, we really did need a question/task to be given rather than some notational title. What is good here is the AO3: the essay is comparative throughout and there are other views of the texts given at the end. More could have been done with these; they are somewhat tag-on. In terms of the impact of context, however, little is explored: there is a classical text concerned with depression cited and a 1960s mindset mentioned and a few genre observations in the introduction (AO4). The essay is usefully

put together (AO1). It is certainly not Band 5 work, but could be seen as low Band 4.

Overall, this folder receives a swingeing reduction but it had been woefully over-estimated.

7 Candidate E

Task 1: Critical appreciation of a passage from 'Death of a Salesman' pg 57-60

'Death of a salesman' is set in post war America in a capitalist society, where newly evolved businesses are dominating the economy. The character of Willy Loman is a victim to the new quick paced system which has left him behind with his old fashioned ways; it is particularly expressed in this extract. Willy is a highly animated character who not only interests but also intrigues the audience; this may be due to his materialistic nature. During this particular extract Willy, unhappy with his job, wage and family life, is depicted as desperate, unpredictable, yet somewhat hopeful in recovering and seeking 'the American dream'. Earlier Willy is shown to be 'losing his mind' and the audience feels a degree of pathos.

Willy is faced by his boss Howard Wagner 'a powerful symbol of a modern business man' 'insensitive yet honest' in pleading Howard for a more respectful situation in Howard's business 'you said you'd try to think of some spot for me in town' which judging by Howard's description is not the most appealing situations for Willy to find himself in. The scene is built up by the preceding scene in which Willy builds up false hope and optimism of a new, fresh life 'I will never get behind a wheel the rest of my life' thus creating a feeling of anticipation.

Willy's intimidated feelings are made apparent by his entrance to Howard's office. Firstly Willy has to compete with a recording machine for Howard's attention 'Did you ever see one of these wire recorders', showing Howard's priorities do not lie with Willy, also Howard is portrayed to be unfazed when Willy enters the scene, He merely 'glances over his shoulder as Willy enters' again depicting the lack of importance Willy plays to Him. The scene is set with Howard's first indication to engage in talk about Willy's work life 'You didn't crack up again'; this is a very humiliating comment to make as firstly it implies that Howard depicts Willy as delusional and unreliable, also it shows the audience that Willy has previously cracked up, which we know from earlier on in the book when Linda exclaims 'You didn't smash the car again'. Then Willy tries to enforce his plan and idea of a better position in the firm a 'spot in town' which Howard immediately interjects with his shocked comment of 'with us' which again humiliates and belittles Willy.

Stage directions indicate Willy is beginning to become '(desperate)' whereas Howard is now depicted as '(angry)'. Willy finally engages in his speech of Dave Singleman an obvious aspiration in Willy's life 'Be remembered and loved and known by so many people'. The name Singleman (and Loman) can be perceived as ironic as it represents independence and possible success of a single man whereas Loman represents insignificant. I feel this speech displays Willy's aspirations and dreams perfectly. His speech on Dave Singleman's business completely contradicts Howard's newly modernised business as Dave's business is more family-like and friendly again showing Willy's naivety to the modern world again re-iterating the reminiscence Willy uses in an evocative manner. Willy mentions Dave's funeral which is key to the plotline of the play in which Dave's funeral had 'hundreds of buyers and sellers' thus showing the popularity of Dave which is something Willy craves. This funeral can be interpreted to play a part in Willy's suicide later on.

The language used by Willy is emotional and nostalgic which can be interpreted in his family stories, reflecting to Howard how friendly he was with his father and also significantly trying to connect with Howard 'Don't you want to know about your father' 'Your father came to me and asked what I thought of the name Howard'. Willy's sentences begin simple however as he becomes more desperate it is apparent that his mind begins struggling to find the right words. It can be seen that Howard plays the part of a politician in which he tries his hardest to keep Willy sweet and not upset him in any manner by using euphemisms 'I had one single solitary spot I'd slam you in' the use of alliteration makes Howard's statement more adamant and powerful .Howard

firstly attempts to relate to Willy and understand him but further on just loses all common foundations and negotiations of Willy's position and just wants him to leave '(Barely interested)'.

This is Willy's last chance of realising the American dream and Willy knows this therefore he is clinging onto it. Money is constantly re-iterated in the Play and again is brought up in this extract in Willy's plead of a higher wage '65 dollars and I could swing it'. Also the isolation Willy feels as if he is trapped because nobody understands him or can relate to him this is shown in his final saying 'Pull you're self together' 'What the hell did I say to him' thus proving even Willy can't even control himself. The fact that Willy constantly re-iterates the past is strange however it captures his delusional state of mind perfectly. The reminiscence may be due to the contrast of his lifestyle compared to his dreams of when he was younger and how near Willy was to achieving his dreams with his brother Ben in Alaska 'I had a yearning to go to Alaska'.

During the play it can be seen that Willy is constantly contradicting himself. During this scene it is more obvious for example it can be seen earlier in the book Willy tells Biff 'If anything falls off the desk don't pick it up' however it can be seen that Willy '*picks up lighter and gives it to Howard*' Also as Willy mentions to Biff not to pull up a chair 'they have office boys for that' however Willy completely contradicts this as he '(pulls a chair from the side)' this can be perceived as his desperation and humbleness in Howard's presence. Thus portraying Willy's weakness and hypocrisy of that even he doesn't understand himself.

The final episode of this extract is comically tragic; Willy Loman accidentally turns on the 'Tape recorder'. Willy's deluded reaction to it is that he mistakes the voice of Howard's son for Frank (Howard's father) in his delusional state. This results in him screaming for it to be turned off 'Shut it off! Shut it off!' Thus represents the end for Willy Loman in a comical yet sad tone and also reinforcing the idea of his deluded mind.

This particular sector is very important in portraying Willy as the lonely and old fashioned character in which he is. This scene is critical in the dialogue of the play as it can be seen as a turning point in Willy's life. The contrast between Willy and Howard is alarming and depicts a major cultural difference between the Old fashioned successful Willy and the modernised, evolved and successful Howard. This scene is clearly Willy's final chance to realise 'The American dream' and the failure makes the scene all the more bitter.

Task 2: Show how the central characters in 'A Streetcar Named Desire' and 'Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil' lead lives consumed by illusion and isolation. To what extent do the respective settings provide appropriate backdrops to the themes

The writers of both 'Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil' by John Berendt and Tennessee Williams' 'A Streetcar Named Desire' exploit the themes of isolation and illusion through a variety of techniques. One way in which both writers approach the themes is through characters. The themes of isolation and illusion are interwoven in some cases due to similar connotations the two words have. Another device used to portray isolation and illusion is that of the settings used by both authors in their literary texts as it allows a deeper perspective of the themes contained within the novels. It is also possible to identify similarities between both novels in relation to the two themes and the resemblance between them.

The non-fiction novel 'Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil', written by John Berendt is set in a 'small, inward-looking, isolated town that thrives on gossip' as Berendt states.

However the town is initially welcoming and hospitable. It is a modern non-fiction novel containing many historical facts surrounding the town of Savannah.

The town itself is isolated in location and is also isolated more subtly through the community's attitude to outsiders and tourists. Savannah, described by Berendt as a 'surviving remnant of the old American south', is a segregated town in America and thus is shown by the conversations the narrator has with residents of the town 'we rather enjoy our separateness'. It is made apparent that the people of Savannah thrive in their isolation 'The whole of Savannah is an oasis we are isolated, gloriously isolated,' and are adamant to carry on this tradition. Not only does the society enjoy its isolation but Savannah is also a fairly complex destination to travel to 'we're not easy to get to at all,' which may be the main inspiration of the separation felt in the city. During the novel one can acknowledge that Savannah has previously turned down offers of large companies moving their headquarters there for example; 'the Prudent Insurance people.' 'But we said no. Too big.' The fact that Savannah is so keen to be segregated tells the audience of the community of Savannah's one dimensional mannerisms and also of the bubble Savannah places itself in.

Berendt is noted to have compared Savannah with Venice in their similar isolated characteristics. "They're both very isolated communities: geographically, historically, culturally -- every way -- emotionally" this may be a reason for the motivation Berendt expressed in Savannah's isolation to such an extent.

'A Streetcar Named Desire' is a play written and set in 1947 in multicultural New Orleans with its jazzy flair, musical culture and mass immigration. The play focuses on the lower class family of the Kowalski, who portray a clear example of immigration (with relevance to Stanley the man of the house, a polish immigrant) and a lower class lifestyle. The play can be seen to represent a divide in the class system between the sisters Stella and Blanche. Stella, married to Stanley, has a humble standard of living whereas Blanche presents a facade of a wealthier and superior lifestyle.

Connotations of isolation are felt in 'A Streetcar Named Desires' setting of New Orleans but not quite as strongly as Savannah. The main depiction of the setting's isolation is the manner in which Blanche is treated with her pompous and peculiar etiquette. We notice of how characters such as Stanley are unsettled about the way she behaves mainly because of her higher class attitude and portentousness towards the lower class housing. 'Why that you had to live in these conditions?', 'Wasn't it ok until she showed here all hoity-toity'. This proves how Stanley feels towards Blanche's superficial ways. He despises them and dislikes the fact that Blanche looks down on him and is lifestyle.

A character that symbolises the themes of isolation and illusion in *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* is Jim Williams. Jim Williams is a famous antique dealer who is accused of first degree murder. The principle reason Williams feels isolated is due to his lonely and daunting situation. One example can be seen at his Christmas party. Williams goes ahead with the party during the heat of his trial and discovers that many people have deserted him. One of these people is a loyal friend of Williams 'Millicent Mooreland'; a faithful friend of Williams' had 'decided not to go' therefore portraying the lack of depth certain characters in the book have in terms of loyalty. Williams sees a minor sector of his party desert him due to fear of their reputations 'Now I shall see who my real friends are' thus depicting the superficiality and illusion of friendship within the community of Savannah.

One can acknowledge that Williams enforces a facade of happiness and security during the heat of his trial. Williams is seen to carry on his Christmas party so as to not arouse suspicion and 'carry on the same'. Williams also carries out his antique deals within prison whilst pretending he is at home. This illusion is comical and also heartbreaking as we can see Williams world crumble before him as he tries to enforce this fantasy on the people outside the prison. Williams even goes to the length of organising a party outside of prison for his mother and friends. This feeble attempt of regularity that Williams is attempting is just a fantasy and illusion that he can carry on his ordinary life whilst he is being charged with murder.

The character of Blanche Du Bois in 'A Streetcar Named Desire' portrays similar aspects of isolation as Williams. However one can also identify her isolation is due to her behaviour and disapproving mannerisms towards the lower classes. A perfect example of this is her immediate comments on the Kowalski's flat. 'Why that you have to live in these conditions?' The image Blanche paints of herself is that of an innocent, vulnerable and misunderstood lady with a clear

vanity issue, constantly demanding compliments from other characters within the play. Blanche has been driven out of her home town of Laurel 'basically told by the mayor to leave town 'due to her outrageous behaviour-an indiscreet sexual liaison with a young man. This segregation has forced her to the point that she has to go and live with her sister and brother in law in a minute apartment. During the play Blanche loses her innocence when she sleeps with a young boy who she taught, 'A seventeen year old boy she got mixed up with.' This immediately creates a feeling of humility and embarrassment for Blanche thus allowing the audience to feel a degree of pathos; however at the same time understanding her loneliness is due to her actions. Blanche is essentially a woman lost because of her behaviour and her past. She is enforcing this facade of popularity on other characters due to her pride; a clear example of this is with Shep Huntle who she pretends is an admirer of hers, whereas the audience can interpret it as just lies and falseness. It is almost as if Blanche has to create this fantasy world of social success in order to survive.

Blanche and Williams censorious behaviour has cast them from society as Blanche slept with a younger boy and Williams apparently murdered a young man. Both these acts had judgemental effects and resulted in the two characters feeling isolated. The two characters have not only lost friends but money, position and respect. Blanche is renowned in Laurel for taking men back to the shady hotel of 'The Flamingo' whilst Williams has lost a lot of money with his barristers; 'Money is ammunition and as long as I have some I'll use it'.

In 'A Streetcar Named Desire' Blanche is again the character who epitomises the theme of illusion described by a critic as 'sufficiently self-aware to know that she cannot survive in the world as it is'. Reality is too harsh, so she must somehow create illusions that will allow her to maintain her 'delicate, fragile hold on life'. Blanche explains of how she 'tells the truth how it ought to be told' and 'wants magic'. This is a clear portrayal of her living in this fantasy world in order to escape the reality of her failure in life. Within the play there are multiple examples of Blanche's delusional mannerisms. One of these is her baths. Blanche regularly baths, a critic of the play Hana Sambrook commented that this 'passion for long baths should be taken as a symbol of her yearning to wash away her guilt'. However these baths can also be perceived as a dramatic function as they allow long gaps on stage for two other characters to speak of Blanche without her involvement. Another example of her fantasy state of mind is that of her fear of the light. She is seen within the play to cover a light with a 'paper lantern' in the Kowalski's flat and has been compared by many critics to a moth's fear of natural light. This fear is easily interpreted as a fear of the truth symbolised as a clear light and may be the reason Williams considered the name 'The passion of a moth' for the title of the play.

A character who can be compared with Blanche is Danny in 'Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil'. Danny, a young man who has given up on life, is a thug and local hustler. He lives in this superficial world in which he doesn't 'give a shit' and doesn't 'take any shit'. He feels he must enforce an illusion on Corinne, a local art student, in order to have sex with her. He pretends Jim William's house is his and tours it like it is his castle 'All this shit comes out of castles and palaces' thus depicting his insecurity that he must implement this facade of having money to achieve his goal of sex. However later in the non fiction novel Danny's true

sensitivity, beyond his illusion of toughness, is expressed as he states that his 'family don't care' about him and that he has 'no one'. He is obviously troubled by this as he feels he must express it, even to Corinne who he had only just met. Danny obsesses over death and this is interesting to note as his main goal in life is to achieve a big tomb stone of which he says, 'Williams will buy it for me'. This sad detail tells the reader of Danny's lack of motivation in life.

To conclude, both illusion and isolation play major roles in the depiction of characters and in the plot of both the play and the novel. These two themes assist the flow and add to the plots of both the play and novel. The themes are most apparent in the characters of Williams and Blanche. Whilst Blanche focus on a fantasy world to escape her reality, Williams attempts to hide his situation. However there are several other characters that support these themes as well. The two themes link in well with both the play and non fiction novel and give the texts greater depth for the reader and audience to consider.

Commentary

The writing on this critical appreciation is clear although not 100% accurate (there are missing capital letters, commas, “sector” is used instead of section, etc). It would benefit from a sharply worded task which would provide something for the candidate to hang this response on; it begins with overview of the play and extract; moves on to character; then considers language; theme; Willy’s journey; significance. All of these are useful areas, but they do not wholly cohere despite their relevance to a close reading discussion of the passage. The appreciation of the extract is keen and knowledgeable, although the double weighting of AO2 for this item needed observing more. The top of Band 4 is a fair placing, however; this is certainly good work.

While one is not convinced by the term “non-fiction novel”, the rest of this Linked Texts piece is secure. The writing is clear and well focused (AO1), although Williams the playwright and Williams the antique dealer need differentiating a little more. AO4 is well addressed at the start, but fades later in the essay. There is some AO3, although the candidate prefers to write about texts separately; however, while this is irrefutable, there are connections made between the two texts at points of transition also. Hana Sambrook and an unnamed critic supply a critical position on *A Streetcar Named Desire* that show some address to the second strand of AO3. The Top of Band 4 is a little high, but this is acceptable in the middle of the Band.

Overall, this is a useful folder on American literature, although the second piece could have done more with genre. The Centre needed to be more aware of the nature of the achievement against AO3 and AO4.

8 Candidate F

Task 1: 'It is Blanche's inability to tell the truth that leads to her tragic downfall.'

I agree up to a certain point that Blanche's inability to be truthful is her own fault. Williams presents her as an insecure woman, lying to herself and others around her, allowing her to make life appear as it should be, rather than as it really is. William's main ways of presenting Blanche's character is her inability to understand reality. She does this through artistic truth. Blanche lies because she refuses to accept life in the way it has treated her and it is this which helps Williams to bring out her insecurity and instability which lead to her tragic downfall. She admits to Mitch that she lies because she does not want to let others understand her past with the death of her young husband and the affair which forced her to leave Belle Reve.

When Stanley confronts her about her lies of she continues to pretend, saying; 'He returned with a box of roses to beg for my forgiveness'. This continues to anger Stanley. When he asks Blanche about Shep Huntleigh Blanche gets confused and does not remember what she has said about him earlier. Stanley sees her struggling and attacks her weakness. However this apparent search for truth is only a ploy. Stanley is firmly stuck in the 'new world', emphasising its aggression and power. He uses this against Blanche to unravel the truth of her past, because he's, 'been on to you from the start'. As Blanche begins to weaken Stanley continues to break her down pushing her further towards her tragic downfall. Stanley's harsh behaviour towards Blanche is not because he abhors her lies but because, in the power struggle between the working class immigrants of America and its old agrarian south, there can only be one winner.

The personalities of the two protagonists representing the new world and the old symbolise the death of old America at the hands of the new aggressive and powerful America. The 'Blue-piano' . represents the harsh outside world and is linked to the roar of an approaching locomotive when Stanley confronts Blanche. She, 'Crouches, pressing her fist to her ears until it has gone'. The death of young husband was the 'beginning of her mental downfall and now the noise of the train; which tore America apart, is heard prefiguring her own metaphorical death.

Animalistic language and 'jungle cries' occur as Blanche's mind begins to breakdown. Williams' use of 'inhuman' language such as 'let's have some rough-house', emphasises the casting of the two characters as predator and prey, indicating that only the strongest will survive the battle between them.

It is not Blanche's inability to tell the truth which leads her to her downfall but her inherent mental instability which is quickened by Stanley's aggressive behaviour towards her and leads to her tenuous hold on reality being broken. Ultimately the fate of this tragic figure is to be sent to a mental institution. Stanley teases Blanche saying, 'We had this date from the beginning', showing he was always going to overpower her, 'He picks up her inert figure and carries her to the bed', emphasising the power, of the 'New world'. It is his action, and not the impact of her lies, that leave Blanche fatally damaged and destroyed although it is true to say that her lies helped bring her to this point. Stanley did not rape Blanche because he desired her but to prove a point to her; to show his strength. Stanley, wanting to wipe out the 'Old South's elitist world, in which he was not welcome, so he raped Blanche as a way of forcing her out of his life. He gained power over Stella by overpowering and destroying her sister. In Blanche's past, sex was associated with death, the death of her relatives in Belle Reve and her young husband's death due to his sexuality. So William's choice of this means to destroy her is in keeping with her tragic past.

Blanche's fear of death links itself with her fears of aging and the loss of beauty. These fears cause her to turn away from the reality of the harsh world to a land of artistic truth but her final

downfall is linked with her failure to survive Stanley's actions; although it was a battle, she was tragically doomed to lose from the beginning.

Bibliography

A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams - published by Methuen.

Websites

Website used - www.spartnotes.co.uk

Notes used - 'A Streetcar Named Desire' York notes advanced - notes by Hana Sambrook.

Task 2: 'The authors use the chief protagonists more effectively than the setting to convey the central themes within the novels' How far do you agree with this statement?

Michael Frayn and L.P Hartley use their chief protagonists, Stephen and Leo, more effectively than the setting to convey their themes of coming of age, class, love and passion. However, the setting is an essential part within the novels. 'The Go-Between' and 'Spies' are both novels which deal with the coming of age of young boys who are caught up in the adult world of passion and deception. Whereas the authors use setting to inform the readers about the main themes, I believe it is their portrayal of the chief protagonists, Leo and Stephen, which is more effective in conveying those themes.

In the novel 'Spies', Stephen embodies the experience of growing up which is one of the main themes of the novel. However, Frayn's presentation of the hide out also informs the reader about this theme. Although initially the boys wish to be alone, with a main rule being strictly no girls, the way the hide out is used reflects Stephen's growing maturity. The hide out is Keith and Stephen's secret den which gives them a sense of security, *'when we're in there no one in the world can see us'*, their self-deception shows how fully they throw themselves into their adventures. They hide in the camp to spy on people living on their street, Stephen's *'knees ache from crouching. I try to shift my weight from one leg to another'*. However, as the story progresses Barbara Berrill, a young girl of the same age living in the same street enters the boys' hide out. Stephen squirms at Barbara's unpleasant girliness and her female mannerisms, *'Barbara Berrill in her school purse, with her school skirt tucked primly over her hunched-up knees'*. When she kisses him, Stephen *'manages not to flinch'* and politely says that the kiss is *'quite nice'* but we see that he is beginning to find Barbara attractive. As the reader we watch as Stephen, a young boy, is growing up and maturing. When Barbara says *'I thought we could, have another smoke together'*, this time he shrugs *'offhandedly to conceal the great leap of excitement inside'*. The hide out changes from being the boys' den to a place where Stephen encounters his first kiss and smokes his first cigarette, symbolising his coming of age.

Although the setting marks the change in Stephen, it is Frayn's portrayal of his character that truly explores the theme of coming of age. Stephen is presented as an innocent young boy. His physical appearance led him to be teased at school and even by his older self as the narrator.

However, we are able to see his troubles with a sense of perspective. Frayn shows his childish incomprehension when faced with an adult world. Stephen's lack of understanding is partly revealed by Mrs Hayward's diary. The 'x' marks her menstrual cycle. But Stephen's young immature mind is proven through his lack of knowledge as he jumps to the conclusion that the 'x' is evidence that Keith's mother is a German spy. The process of changing into an adolescent is speeded up for Stephen as he has to come to terms with what Barbara is fully aware of, *'lots of ladies have boyfriends while everyone's daddies are away'*. Stephen discovers that Mrs Hayward and Uncle Peter are having an affair. Like Stephen, we never actually discover to what extent Mrs Hayward has *'taken Uncle Peter to her bosom'*, but Stephen becomes involved within Mrs Hayward

and Uncle Peter's secret and his view of adulthood changes, *'I'm leaving behind the terrors of childhood-and stepping into a new world'*, and begins to play a part in the adult world.

Frayn skilfully makes Stephen embody the coming of age theme through narrative form. There is such a dislocation between young Stephen and old Stefan, that they could be considered as two different characters. Stephen is held back as a child, we see fear, *'I'm a child again and everything's before me'*. He rarely gives his opinion or shows feelings and is clearly dominated by Keith. However, we see him grow as he begins to show a strong sense of moral duty. He may be *'reeking with fear'* but he conquers this to take provisions to Uncle Peter in the Barns, showing his bravery. Frayn uses the presentation of Stephen's character to prove how much Stephen has grown up compared to when he was playing at building the *'transcontinental railway'* in Keith's back garden.

The farm is a setting within *'The Go-Between'* which explores the coming of age theme. Leo is just thirteen when he discovers the farm cottage, to the left of the hill at the end of the road *'between spare hedgerows'*. Leo shows his age when he *'opened the gate and went in'*, there facing him *'was a straw stack'* which he slides down. The farm is associated with fertility and the development of Leo's sexual nature. Ted introduces him to the horses, one of which is in foal and another is called Wild Oats, *'he stopped and kissed the velvet nose, and the horse showed its appreciation'* Leo is bemused by Ted's grin which indicates his naivety. However, this is where Leo plucks up the courage to ask Ted about spooning, *'I had thought of it as a kind of game that grown-ups played'*, showing that he is becoming curious about sex.

In a similar way to *'Spies'* it is Hartley's presentation of Leo's character that truly conveys the theme of growing up. Young Leo's character is sensitive and eager to please. Graham Handley suggests that Leo can be seen as *'too untypical of his age-group'* but I believe that because Leo is an only child he is therefore comfortable around adults and is more mature for his age. He is bullied by Jenkins and Strode and in revenge Leo formulates two curses and writes them in blood in his diary. The next day his enemies fall from the school roof. Leo consequently believes that he has caused the accident, *'I was quite a hero'* and now enjoys his new reputation of being a magician. In contrast to this boyish behaviour, as the novel progresses Leo becomes infatuated with Marian in an unrealistic way. His behaviour shows how he is sexually immature and unaware of the ways in which lovers behave. Ironically he associates Marian with the Virgin in his signs of the zodiac in the diary. Leo feels possessive towards Marian, and imagines her as *'Maid Marian'* to his *'Robin Hood'*. This analogy proves his attraction to her but also emphasises that he is still a boy who is fond of adventure stories. His misunderstanding of the adult world of real passion and deception is the reason for the trauma he suffers when he sees *'the Virgin and the Water Carrier, two bodies moving like one'*. Hartley emphasises Leo's idealistic view of the world by describing Marian and Ted as characters from the zodiac. After Leo tragically interrupts and dramatically discovers Marian and Ted's secret, he is damaged for the rest of his life. Hartley presents Leo to have chosen to live a lonely and unmarried life because of the psychological damage he has previously suffered. In contrast, Stephen seems to be able to carry on a normal life after his coming of age experience in *'Spies'*, he is merely haunted by his unspoken memories when he smells the *'liguster'*, which consequently takes him back to his youth.

Although both novelists explore the theme of coming of age more successfully through their protagonists, Hartley skilfully brings setting and character together in the scene where Leo destroys the belladonna. The outhouse is one of Leo's main attractions when staying at Brandham Hall. His main fascination is the Atropa Belladonna, the deadly nightshade. Marian comes to symbolise the belladonna, Hartley emphasises that it is very beautiful however, *'every part of it was poisonous'*. Leo is immediately attracted to the plant, *'it wanted me'*, but he believes that destroying it will end the affair between Marian and Ted. The scene is described in a highly sexual way, *'it was stifling, yet delicious...so yielding and this must be the berry that pressed against my lips'*, suggesting that it is as he tries to end the relationship between Ted and Marian that he encounters his first sexual experience.

Both writers also convey the theme of class through setting. In *'Spies'*, Stephen's family have less money than Keith's, their house is less impressive and untidy. Stephen's house is smaller and less respectable because it is a semi-detached and Keith's is detached. The houses symbolise

their inhabitants' social status, with Stephen's front gate *'rotted drunkenly away'* and Keith's *'white wicker gate on its well-oiled hinges'*. However, it is Frayn's presentation of Stephen's sense of social inferiority which illustrates the class divide so vividly. Keith dominates Stephen and makes him feel so downtrodden that he cannot even tell him that he has spelt private as *'privet'* at the entrance to their camp. And yet Stephen feels *'incomprehensible good fortune in being Keith's friend'* and is happy to be bullied by him because he comes from *'the right local preparatory school'*.

Hartley uses the contrast between the setting of Brandham Hall and Ted's farm to explore the theme of class. The hall is a grand *'Georgian Mansion'*, filled with works of art and servants. It is a place of leisure, *'the hammock of crimson canvas slung on two poles'* and the inhabitants are relaxed. We *'hear them laugh as'* the hammock tips them out and spills *'them on to the grass'*.

This creates an impression of high class luxury. However, Ted is a working farmer and lives in a cottage on a farm which he rents from the owner of Brandham Hall, Trimmingham. The farm cottage is a house of work whereas Brandham Hall is a house of leisure. Leo, looking around Ted's home, noticed there were *'no ornaments'* it *'was very different from'* his *'recent surroundings'*, emphasising the class distinction between the Maudsley's house and Ted Burgess's farm. Leo, however, is the go-between between the worlds; therefore the description of his character's responses to the different classes explores the theme of social class even more effectively.

As a child Leo does not fully understand the power, wealth and status within the social order, but he considers the upper classes as superior beings and relates them back to the signs of the Zodiac. Leo's background is more humble than the world of Brandham Hall as he is from the middle classes. But Leo's belief in social hierarchy emphasises the social divide to the reader.

He idolises Trimmingham, the viscount and believes himself to be above Ted, the *'working'* farmer, *'I did not despise him for changing his tune when he knew where I came from: it seemed to me right; natural and proper that he should'*. Hartley presents Leo's snobbish behaviour as dangerous when he likens Leo's aspirations to the myth of Daedalus and Icarus; he is turned into a *'scorched cindery creature'* by his encounter with the Maudsleys.

The theme of love and passion is not as well conveyed by the protagonists because the young boys are on the brink of adolescence and their understanding of passionate love is distorted. Frayn shows how Stephen needed Barbara to tell him that love affairs are going on around him. Leo is horrified when he finds out about Ted and Marian's love affair. He believes that social class is more important and that Marian should in fact be with Trimmingham. He is damaged by the graphic encounter with passion at the end of the novel when he sees Marian and Ted making love, *'during my breakdown I was like a train going through a tunnel; sometimes in the daylight; sometimes dark'*. In this case the settings are used more successfully by the authors to convey the theme of love and passion.

Frayn successfully presents the theme of love and passion through the setting of the Barns. Uncle Peter is known to be hiding in the barns for shelter while Mrs Hayward visits him. There are *'no actual barns to be seen, only a desolation of overgrown brickfootings and collapsed sheets of black corrugated iron'*, the Barns are not classed as a safe place, but a place of growth and fertility. They are presented as being on the edge of society. Therefore it is a suitable place for the lovers to meet. Their love crosses the boundaries of society and does not follow the social rules. This is similar to the setting of the outhouse where Marian and Ted meet which is away from Brandham Hall, like the Barns and is on the edge of respectable society, so both are a suitable place for an illicit love affair to take place. The belladonna grows in the outhouse which adds to the atmosphere of love and passion. Frayn and Hartley use these settings to present love and passion as something that exists on the edge of society. Illicit relationships must remain hidden and if they are exposed, as shown by Hartley in *'The Go-Between'*, they cause untold havoc and destruction. Passionate love is presented as dangerous towards respectable society and is seen as a threat.

The novels were written four decades apart and yet they convey similar messages about the themes of social class, coming of age and the adult world of passionate love. Anne Rooney believes that *'Spies'* is *'influenced by the coming of age genre without belonging to it fully'* and I

agree that compared to Leo, Stephen seems to remain confused about Uncle Peter and Mrs Hayward and finds the liguster fragrance '*intimately unsettling*' to the very end.

Bibliography

'The Go-Between' by L P Hartley

'Spies' by Michael Frayn

York notes advanced 'Spies' by Anne Rooney

Brodies notes 'The Go-Between' by Graham Handley

Word count: 2,232

Commentary

The Centre offered the Critical Piece at the bottom of Band 4, but it is better described as competent and therefore belongs in the middle of Band 3. The candidate is knowledgeable of the play (AO1), but only has an intermittent focus on the passage. Its approach is narrativised, which means AO2 is tackled by the recognition of detail en passant and seeing the symbolism of features and characters of the play. The forward thrust of the writing rather prevents detailed exploration.

The Linked Texts piece has a much better grasp of quotation and shows good textual knowledge (AO1). An overarching argument is present in the piece. Sometimes the texts are discussed discretely, but they are also brought together at many points (AO3). Both texts are given the benefit of other readings (AO3). There is clear recognition of context at the end of the essay (AO4), but this area should have been explored more in the main body of the essay providing an angle to points on class, setting, etc. It is a good discussion in need of more explicit AO4; a high Band 3/low Band 4 seems fair.

Overall, this folder is a little high, because the Critical Piece lacked passage scrutiny, but it is not too far away from the centre's estimate.

9 Candidate G

Task 1: 'With close analysis of your chosen poem show how Ted Hughes uses the theme of violence'

Ted Hughes earlier wrote about nature especially savagery of animals. Ted Hughes is aware of the violence and beauty in the natural world. He uses animals as metaphors to express his views on life. He writes about how animals fight to be the fittest and survive just like humans fight for success, for example 'Hawk Roasting.' Ted Hughes uses the 'divine law' to explain his violent imagery. Scientific objectivity can violate this law through the materialistic outlook. Hughes believes that the use of positive violence is necessary.

In the first stanza Hughes went into great detail to describe the pike in full, physical appearance and personality, so the reader can use the imagery to imagine the character in the poem, the pike "three inches long, perfect." This suggests that it has all the characteristics of its parents even though it is still in its adolescent stages. The poem illustrates the 'Pike' as "Pike in all parts, green tigering the gold." This suggests the marking of the pike. Ted Hughes has included another animal in this poem. He has used the word "tigering" to compare the characteristics of the Pike. Although the pike and tiger are two completely different animals they both share similar qualities as they both have authority over the other animals in their habitat. They are "Killers from the egg," signifying the fact that a pike is an animal which is a predator which will kill from birth reflecting its nature instinct. The poem portrays the pike as having a "malevolent aged grin." This illustrates to the readers that the pike is evil and malicious towards the other animals. The pike is described being, "A hundred feet long in their world." This adds to the image that the pike is the biggest and most dominant species in their living environment.

The pike declares his authority over the other animals by swimming across the top water. Ted Hughes has shown this by using the binary opposite technique "They dance on the surface." This suggests that the pike lurks around watching out for its prey, ready to pounce at any time. The pike is very egoistic, "Stunned by their own grandeur," this means that the pike notices and is satisfied with all of its movement. Ted Hughes creates an image of how the pike catches its prey, "The jaws hooked clamp and fangs." This is a very violent description which adds to the image of the pike being vicious and wanting to kill. The pike's movement is described as, "The gills kneading quietly, and the pectorals." This shows the pike's breathing actions. The pike is silent and swift in its movements, suggesting its body is built for its life purpose to kill. This may be why the pike has become so dominant in its hunting. The poet uses the sentence, "With the sag belly and the grin it was born with," to describe how the pike looks after eating another fish. "Sag belly" is used to illustrate the fact that the pike has just consumed another fish. "Grin it was born with," is used to show that the pike is quite content in eating other fish and that this is what the pike has been doing since it was born. Ted Hughes shows that they are greedy by saying, "One jammed past its gills down the other gullet." This is a very distressing image of the pike's death. It describes how the pike kills its prey but then accidentally chokes on it which then causes its death. The pike has suffered this death because it feels that it is the top of the food chain and can eat anything.

Ted Hughes has used many techniques to illustrate how the pike's genetics affect their malicious personality, "Killers from the egg, the malevolent aged grin." This suggests that the evil is genetically in the pike from birth and no matter what age the pike is, it is genetically programmed to be harmful towards other animals. The pike has genetic qualities that cannot change, this is shown in the quote, "The jaws hooked clamp and fangs, Not to be changed at this date; A life subdued to its instruments." This shows the pike is a vicious killer and that it cannot be changed. We are told how the pike behaves in its natural habitat, "Submarine delicacy and horror." The pike is a delicate and distinguished species but is also a natural born killer.

The poem describes the environment that the pike lives in, "Over a bed of emerald, silhouette." This line states how the pike is swimming in dirty water. Ted Hughes has added other objects that live within the environment which creates a more realistic image, "In pond under the heart struck lily pads." This shows where the pike goes for shade. The poet may have used the word 'heart' to contrast with the pike's actual personality. The pond has been illustrated to be deserted where no one visits, "Logged on last years black leaves watching 'upwards' as there may be a threat to it lying in the dark underworld. The pike has now been moved to an artificial environment, "Three we kept behind glass, Jungled in weed." This is telling the reader about how three pikes have been taken out of their natural environment. It also shows the pike is now on land away from its natural surroundings, "High and dry and dead in the willow- herb."

The poet tells us about the reaction of humans towards the pike. Ted Hughes tells us the background of the pond. He does this by saying, "Of the monastery that planted them." The line tells us that the monk built the monastery and the pond, but now the monastery has been destroyed. People in the poem consider the pond to be a historical landmark, "Stilled legendary depth, it was as deep as England." The sentence describes the pond as part of the English history. It illustrates the pond to be 'legendary' this could be because it is so old and maybe the fact it may have had some interesting things which occurred. The person in the poem is trying to keep really quiet and trying to remain unrecognised. Ted Hughes shows this by saying, "But silently cast and fished with the hair frozen on my head." The person is in fear of the pike as it is such a violent and malicious creature. There is use of oxymoron, "The still splashes on the dark pond." This is used to describe how the man fishes. He is trying to keep as quiet and un-noticed as possible.

In conclusion, Ted Hughes expressed the theme of violence well in the "Pike." He uses imagery, comparisons to violent animals and violent words such as 'horror.' The persona of the pike reflects the theme of violence. Critics have argued "Hughes's vivid descriptions of his animals troubled some of the Movement - oriented British critics, who thought he was openly advocating violence." The pike "inherited aggression" a "killer from the egg." "The pond where fisherman persona fishes is "as deep as England," and its legendary depths might produce cultural dreams from the past as dark and malevolent as the vicelike jaws of a pike." In reference to Hughes's experience, "the pike in the pond..are really emblems of a frightening inheritance that Hughes will..."master and last.'

This poem makes me reconsider the Pike, Hughes contrasts the violent imagery of the pike with images of "grandeur." "The pike is dominant to its surrounding similar to humans above "the dark pond."

Task 2: 'Difficulties are meant to rouse, not discourage. The Human Spirit is to grow strong by conflict'

Show how the characters of David in 'The Lost Boy' by Dave Pelzer and of Amir in 'The Kite Runner' by Khaled Hosseini, grow strong, despite the conflict they experience. Conflict and betrayal has an impact on a child's life as they may lose their parents, their childhood and maybe even their own life. There are many children who have been involved in action or conflict. This makes them feel they deserve what they receive, and they may also think it's normal to everyone because it happens on a regular basis. All children want is to be loved, cared and protected, but in some cases this doesn't happen. Neglect and physical, emotional and sexual abuse are the main types of abuse which most occur nowadays. These can have short term and long term effects on children and can destroy their future as well as their childhood. Children who have been abused behave very differently to children who live a normal happy life. They feel isolated, lonely and insecure. Unfortunately the abuse of children continues today, despite best efforts to prevent it. It is the source many narratives, fact and fictional.

'The Kite Runner' is mainly fiction but there are autobiographical elements which are shown in Khaled Hosseini's writing. The characters are made up and the plot is invented, however the settings are real. He was born in Kabul in 1965. His father who was a diplomat with the Afghan Foreign Ministry which means they moved frequently. Khaled Hosseini's family moved to San Jose where he had graduated from Santa Clara University where he earned a bachelor's degree in biology. He is now a doctor in San Jose. Khaled Hosseini's background is very similar to how he has described the life of Amir, who is the main character, The story begins in Kabul Afghanistan where Amir is born, just before the Russian invasion. He lived in a stable home with his father Baba, childhood friend Hassan and Baba servant Ali. After a misunderstanding Ali and Hassan moved away. Soon after Amir and his father had to flee to Peshawar because the Russian Invasion was taking place. They then moved to, California where Amir and Baba lived their life. Amir also graduated from high school then eventually university, and became a writer, but not before overcoming many difficulties, some inherited and some of his own making.

By comparison 'The Lost Boy' by Dave Pelzer it is autobiographical as he is describing his past history and own experiences. The characters, the plot and the settings are real, and have really happened in the writer's life, whereas in the 'The Kite Runner', the author Khaled Hosseini added his background but emphasized the narrative which made it more of a reality. Pelzer is writing about his background and explores, in particular, his adolescence. The author has achieved a lot throughout his life as he became a member of the Air Force, and worked in a juvenile hall as well as many other 'youths at risk' places.

In the novel 'The Kite Runner' there is Amir, one of two main characters; the other is Hassan. Amir is the son of an influential man, while Hassan is his servant, a Hazara Hassan is loyal and sincere and will go out of his way to help Amir. Whereas Amir is completely opposite as he is very selfish and feels he has to compete with Hassan for his father's love and respect. Hassan looked up to Amir whereas Amir looked up to his father, Baba. Amir bullied by an older teenager called Assef for being involved with a Hazara. Assef believed that Hassan didn't belong within their community and should live in Hazarjat. Assef always threatened Amir and was going to attack him with brass knuckles but Hassan as brave as he is, threatened he would shoot out Assef's eye with his slingshot. Hassan is a very successful kite runner and helped Amir wins the kite running competition. When the seemingly lone Hassan ran into Assef and his two friends in an alley, Assef took revenge on him for his previous threat and assaulted and raped him. The hiding Amir oversees this appalling event but does nothing. He didn't help Hassan because he thought if Baba found out how brave he was, he would love Hassan more as Baba believes 'a .boy who can't stand up for himself becomes a man who can't stand up to anything.' Amir pretended he didn't see anything, 'Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay, to win Baba. Was it fair price? The answer floated to my conscious mind before I could thwart it. He was just a Hazara, wasn't he?' Amir had to hide away his emotions because he didn't want to seem a failure to his father as he already thinks that Baba blames him for his mother's death and couldn't live up to his expectations.

Amir is willing to sacrifice the friendship of Hassan to get what he wants. Amir receives gifts from Baba for winning the kite competition which makes his relationship with Baba undergo significant change. For the interim, his success, largely due to Hassan, bonds Amir with his father and he achieves the acknowledgement he has craved. However, his betrayal of Hassan will have serious repercussions for Amir. Rather than giving him strength as a person, his betrayal weakens him until he is forced to confront his abuse of his friend's trust.

By comparison, to 'The Kite Runner', 'The Lost Boy' by Dave Pelzer has a very similar theme of betrayal and shows how the characters from both novels grow strong despite the betrayal and conflict they experience. Pelzer had a very brutal childhood, 'I don't dare make a sound as I cry deep inside, I know I'm wrong. And as always, it's all my fault,' he suffered many punishments and use of conflict. The young boy was betrayed of hope because his father used to stand-up for the boy whereas later on in the novel he had lack of concern and just let the mother treat him as a slave. The boy took the beatings which was unacceptable as he was always told he was a 'naughty boy.' This affected the boy physically and emotionally as he always thought he deserved what he got as he was an insecure child who desperately wanted to win the affection of his mother.

He thought he was never live up to his mother's expectations. This boy had the choice either to stay in the same household or get out. 'If you think I treat you so badly, you can leave.' For his own pride he left knowing that whatever happened to him he would have a better life. He was a very scared boy who didn't have any confidence in himself.

When the police got involved with this young boy's life, he felt that if he had told them anything about his life he would be betraying his family. He was going from foster home to foster home while hiding the fact he felt isolated, fearful and devastated. He felt victimized at each home he lived in as he felt he needed to make an effort to fit in. He believed he would do anything to conform, even befriend an untrustworthy person. His naivety was to be blamed on his mother's maltreatment meaning he had never felt at home, comfortable as himself before. The turning point in Pelzer's life finally came when he was in his last foster home, where his foster father inspired him to read books on aeroplanes. This led him to think more enthusiastically of his future, which led him into the Air Force. Finally he could be himself and start making the steps into the success he has become, leaving behind a life of betrayal, lies and deceit.

For the fictional Amir it took a while longer - until his adulthood. In order to put distance between himself and Hassan, he manages the dismissal of Hassan and his father by planting some money and a golden watch under Hassan's bed and tells Baba that they have gone missing. Baba confronts Hassan and he makes a false confession because he knows Amir had seen what happened to him as he has been avoiding him ever since. Baba always said that the greatest crime is theft, There is only one sin, only one. And that is theft. Every other sin is a variation of theft. When you kill a man, you steal a life. You steal his wife's right to a husband; rob his children of a father. When you tell a lie, you steal someone's right to the truth. When you cheat, you steal the right to fairness.' Baba surprisingly forgives Hassan for what he had supposedly done because in his conscience he knows that he has stolen from Amir, the knowledge that Hassan was his half brother. Hassan's disappearance helped Amir get over the daily reminder of his betrayal, but he still lived with the guilt.

When Amir and Baba move to US their relationship changed and Amir begins to view his father as a more complex man. Amir met refugee Sohraya Taheri and her family at a flea market. Baba later got diagnosed with cancer but he declined medical help. Amir and Sohraya got married shortly after Baba had passed away. A few years later Amir received a phone call from Baba's business partner who was seriously ill and living in Peshawar and asked him to go back there. He eventually had the opportunity to go back home and redeem himself until he found out it was too late and he found out he lived his life in total betrayal and lies. Amir realised Baba tried to redeem himself as he always gave Hassan gifts and also got the best surgeons to fix his cleft lip. He also built an orphanage to protect women and stood up to a British soldier who tried to rape an Afghanistan woman. This suggests that he is guilty for committing adultery and redeems himself by helping others. Although it was too late for Amir to have a relationship with Hassan, he wanted to help his son Sohrab.

The Taliban which is the role of Assef and the theme of betrayal are a strong influence in the lives of both Hassan and Sohrab. The sexual abuse they both face at the hands of Assef bonds them too, however they remain unaware of this. This is where Amir realises he has a way of showing his care for Hassan and relieving himself of the guilt he has carried since the 'frigid overcast day in the winter:'

In conclusion both novels are showing how the human spirit is capable of overcoming adversity. In 'The Kite Runner' Amir lived with years in guilt until Rahim Khan told him something very important, ;There's a way to be good again.' This made Amir feel there was a chance where he could redeem himself and get rid of the guilt which has been destroying his life. When he was fighting Assef he felt relieved with himself as he was thinking, 'I hadn't been happy and I hadn't felt better, not at all. But I did now. My body was broken but I felt healed.' Even though he was in so much pain, he knew he had regained success in his life by helping a lonely young boy who he would be giving him a life he deserved. Towards the end of the book Sohrab began his life with Amir and his wife in California, and his life had completely changed.

Whereas in 'The Lost Boy' he transcends from being a vulnerable, mistreated and an unwanted youth to an ambitious, determined and strong minded young man. 'After all the years of being put down by others who felt they were so superior I had had it.' He had begun to stick up for himself and let no-one put him down.

Commentary

The Critical Piece shows competent knowledge of "Pike". Sometimes the discussion is a little wooden and sometimes it loses focus, but in general it is appropriate and focused in a straightforward way (AO1). The introduction is a little catch-all, but references Hughes's early work and mentions "Hawk Roosting" so there is a limited sense of a wider body of work. Aspects of AO2 do come through, but the style of writing is more about explaining and paraphrasing than exploring or analysing. The piece is solid and responsive but lacks a cutting edge: a mid Band 3.

The Linked Texts piece could have been interestingly different with this pairing and one of the texts being non-fiction, but ultimately there is not enough coverage of *The Lost Boy*. Textual knowledge of Hosseini's novel is creditable. Because Pelzer's text is rarely present in the essay, the writing does not really get to grips with AO3 (comparison) and, although reviews at the very least would have been available, the other AO3 requirement (alternative readings) is not present. The address to AO4, contextual matters, however, was much stronger in the piece. Something of a missed opportunity: the candidate projects enough clarity and interest to suggest a better mark, but because of the Pelzer/AO3 shortfalls in this essay, it must be perceived as limited: a high Band 2.

Overall, this folder is probably worth a bare pass, but Item 1 indicates this candidate could have done much better.