A LEVEL

Exemplar Candidate Work

ENGLISH LITERATURE

H472
For first teaching in 2015

H472/03 Comparative and contextual study
Summer 2017 examination series

Version 1
## Contents

**Introduction** | 3
---|---
Exemplar 1 – Task 1 Close Reading | 4
Level 3 response – 5 marks

Exemplar 2 – Task 1 Close Reading | 6
Level 5 response – 10 marks

Exemplar 3 – Task 1 Close Reading | 8
Level 5 response – 12 marks

Exemplar 4 – Task 1 Recreative | 12
Level 5 response – 10 marks

Exemplar 5 – Task 1 Recreative | 16
Level 6 response – 13 marks

Exemplar 6 – Task 1 Recreative | 20
Level 6 response – 15 marks

Exemplar 7 – Task 2 Comparative | 24
Level 3 response – 10 marks

Exemplar 8 – Task 2 Comparative | 27
Level 5 response – 19 marks

Exemplar 9 – Task 2 Comparative | 31
Level 6 response – 25 marks
Introduction

These exemplar answers have been chosen from the summer 2017 examination series.

OCR is open to a wide variety of approaches and all answers are considered on their merits. These exemplars, therefore, should not be seen as the only way to answer questions but do illustrate how the mark scheme has been applied.

Please always refer to the specification (http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-english-literature-h072-h472-from-2015/) for full details of the assessment for this qualification. These exemplar answers should also be read in conjunction with the sample assessment materials and the June 2017 Examiners' Report to Centres available on the OCR website http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/.

The question paper, mark scheme and any resource booklet(s) will be available on the OCR website from summer 2018. Until then, they are available on OCR Interchange (school exams officers will have a login for this).

It is important to note that approaches to question setting and marking will remain consistent. At the same time OCR reviews all its qualifications annually and may make small adjustments to improve the performance of its assessments. We will let you know of any substantive changes.
Exemplar 1

A Level English Literature

Learners are required to study three literary texts. The three texts must include one prose text, one poetry text and one drama text:

- the texts must have been first published or performed in 1900 or later
- at least one of these texts must have been first published or performed in 2000 or later.

**Task 1 Close Reading**

**Exemplar 1**

**Level 3 response - 5 marks**

Pages 38-41 “she felt the atmosphere turning... her heart beat like wings in her chest.” Comment on Tempest’s presentation of Gloria’s attitudes to Clive during the climatic moments of the poem, and how this is characteristic of the presentation of her character throughout the poem.

Kate Tempest uses the structure of ‘Brand New Ancients’ to replicate the ways many classical Greek myths were told in stories, her structure that separates the characters’ short epic stories by stanzas makes the reader take a pause to understand what they have been told, for example “Gloria was sniffling lines, hooking up with different guys.” How blunt and to the point this is, the startling effect is also reinforced by the end stopped line. This way of delivery makes the reader more connected to the narrative story and holds their attention as they travel through the poem because they become concerned for the personas within this epic narrative story. Tempest uses breaks between short stories to show the changes in time in the characters’ lives. From these separate journeys, readers are allowed to see the causes that make the characters who they are; we see the development or lack of and therefore see them in new lights.

When studying Tempest’s work it is important to understand that her purpose for writing and performing is to make the audience read people through ‘new eyes’ this is a theme that Tempest dedicates her work to. Tempest aims to reach her audience “Kate Tempest has hit out at ‘intellectual snobbery’ among poets, saying she is fed up with conflict between performance and written poetry.” Tempest views people who are ordinary, mundane and monotonous they are, when in reality, they might seem of simple background but every individual human has a story behind their appearance. I believe this is important to Tempest due to her upbringing in South London, this urban location meant that a lot of people had the appearance of being ‘rough’ and from the ‘ghetto’ however, Tempest wants people to see the small heroics she views and experiences in people and to develop people’s opinions to be only made once you understand someone’s story.

From the background of Clive and Spider, we understand the characters to be shown as ‘brothers’ and a ‘two man nation’ this use of ‘two man’ really stresses how all they have is each other, this is used by Tempest to evoke feelings of worry and care for the two characters. They have been mistreated and brought up in homes that were void of love and care to the point where they would be scared from the broken relationships between the parents. From this detail into the relationship between the two and their upbringing Tempest allows us as readers to view both characters in a different light. Their brash and bold personalities that only show aggression and negativity toward other people that are not themselves replicates similar actions and traits within the Greek gods. From ‘Among Angels’ review on Kate Tempest it is connoted from “They kept people in their place and on their toes – when even the lowliest beggar might be a god in disguise, there were good incentives for treating people properly.” We understand that Tempest wanted to manipulate the characters in order to explore the tension that the reader feels with judging the actions of Spider and Clive even when we are made aware of their rough and challenging upbringing that sculpts their actions and mistakes they are currently making. From Gloria’s fear and panic as readers we feel confused with our emotions towards the character Clive, because we have a good understanding of his life, however from Tempests writing we are more persuaded to feel empathy towards Gloria as she is more innocent and underserving of the pain he is inflicting.

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1 Among Angels. – Kate Tempest’s Brand New Ancients, Jan 2015, Posted by johnfels1 in 2013, Picador Poetry
Examiner commentary

AO1: There are several writing and grammatical errors in the essay and ideas in the paragraphs are not always expressed coherently. The characters are described with some understanding of the parallels with Greek myth. The approach is largely through narrative, showing a very straightforward grasp of the text.

AO2: An attempt is made to discuss structure, though the comments are not clearly exemplified and a number of points are asserted. Discussion of detail in the extract is limited, with the clearest focus on language in the penultimate paragraph.
Task 1 Close Reading
Exemplar 2
Level 5 response - 10 marks

With close reference to a poem of your choice from the Whitsun Wedding, write a critical appreciation of ‘Ambulances’ exploring the ways in which it is indicative of Larkin’s style.

‘Ambulances’ by Philip Larkin is a poem about the ways death is surrounding us in many ways, is always around the corner and can come at any time or place in life. This is because the ambulance in ‘Ambulances’ is used as an extended metaphor about death and ‘all streets in time are visited’ meaning that everyone is affected by death. This is also echoed in the poem ‘Dockery and Son’ where the narrator shows that we are soon going to run out of time and we are not immortal.

In ‘Ambulances’, the topic of the poem is very miserable, bleak and disheartening. This is because it conveys the idea that life is always shadowed over by death. Furthermore, the poem has five stanzas in regular form and has a regular rhyming structure which could show the regularity of death and the inevitability of death and how it could be around the corner from us. Also, the calmness of the narrator which is reflected in the regular rhyming scheme in the poem contrasting with the unpleasantness of death that is ever present. This is also reflected in other poems by Larkin for example ‘Days’ which is a poem with a simple almost light hearted rhyme and rhythm but this contrasts with the message of the poem that is miserable and depressing. Furthermore, the mood in ‘Ambulances’ is undramatic where Larkin gives the reader a snapshot of what is happening outside the ambulance and how everyday life goes even if death is surrounding us. For example, the shoppers walking home ‘past smells of different dinners’ are only briefly interrupted from their daily routines. This is indicative of Larkin’s style as he uses urban and everyday scenery to present people’s sorrows and sadness. For example, in the poem ‘Dockery and Son’ the narrator says ‘I ate an horrible pie’ but also lets the readers know that he’s lonely and not happy when he mentions the ‘unhindered moon’.

Larkin conveys the idea that death can affect and disturb people’s surroundings using everyday imagery. Larkin gives the readers the visual representation of the surroundings and lets them imagine death can come anytime and anywhere. In the second stanza the pattern of the ‘women coming from the shops’ contrasts with what is actually happening right in front of them as they see ‘a wild white face’. In the poem ‘Ambulances’, Larkin also uses the image of ‘the children strewn on steps or road’ to show the way in which everything stops when death comes in. The word ‘strewn’ suggests a freeze frame of the children as if they are dead bodies. The human expression ‘poor soul’ shows the fleeting effect on people who fear death but then have to get on with their lives. ‘For borne away in deadened air’ shows the way death lingers in the atmosphere when it visits ‘every street’. Moreover, the poet gives the readers the idea that everything in life is temporary, ‘something nearly at an end’. He describes life with the vague ‘something’ but death is certain no matter who you are. Larkin comments on the way identity comes to nothing when death arrives ‘Families and fashion, there! At last begin to loosen’ expresses that your identity starts to fade and doesn’t matter anymore when you die. This also shows the contrast between inward emotions and memories that people experience before they die and their external lives which are left outside. This is shown by the difference between the external surroundings, with life carrying on in ‘Loud noons of cities’, and the internal space of the ambulance where the patient is alone and now ‘unreachable’.

The first stanza and the last stanza of ‘Ambulances’ both have full stops at the end which could play on the idea that there is an end to everything and we are mortal, but also that the ambulance is a closed confined space. In addition, the use of the simile ‘closed like confessionals’ in the first stanza could show the intimacy the ambulance creates with the person that is about to die and how quiet it is in the ambulance which is shut off from the outside world.
Examiner commentary

AO1: The essay begins with a solid overview and some placing of the poem within *The Whitsun Weddings*. Later points about tone and style are supported with reference to other poems in the collection. The discussion of the poem is quite developed, though not fully detailed. However, the essay demonstrates a good understanding.

AO2: There is early reference to the poetic structure of the poem, though the points made from the observations are asserted rather than argued. There is, though, an appreciation of tone. General discussion of imagery is given focus with exploration of 'strewn', the 'confessional' simile and more successful points on end-stopped lines. The essay focuses on some key examples in the penultimate paragraph, showing some good analytical methods.
How does Williams present the relationship between illusion and reality in your chosen extract from 'A Streetcar Named Desire'?

Elements of illusion and reality are shown in an array of ways in the play 'A Streetcar Named Desire'. Williams portrays the protagonist, Blanche Dubois, to be living her life as an illusion by depicting herself as pure and sincere, however, in actuality that’s an illusionary image she has created to conceal her sordid past. On the contrary, Tennessee Williams portrays Stanley Kowalski to represent realism. The contrasting personality of the two characters consequently creates great conflict. This is especially displayed in scene 7, whereby Stanley is shown to be tearing down Blanche’s illusions by uncovering the truth about her past to Stella who admonishes him at the beginning of the scene but is eventually convinced.

Williams uses illusions as a key theme to depict the character of Blanche Dubois. She retreats to her fantasy world, using it as coping mechanism, to protect herself from the brutal reality of her past. In scene 7, Blanche interrupts Stanley consistently during his revelations about her past to Stella with the theatrical motif of singing. The imagery created with the lyrics ‘paper moon’ and ‘cardboard sea’ can be seen as a metaphorical reflection of Blanche’s interior state. Tennessee Williams’ use of flimsy materials such as ‘paper’ and ‘cardboard’ illustrates Blanche’s own emotional fragility. The lyrics cynically imply, that the way paper and cardboard are susceptible to damage, Blanche will similarly be unable to perpetuate her pure and innocent persona; therefore inevitably leading to her mental deterioration as a result of being too frail to endure the hardship of her reality. Furthermore, she continues to sing the lyrics ‘but it wouldn’t be make believe if you believe on me!’ heightening the tragedy; since if the characters believed in her portrayal of herself as being pure and virginal, she wouldn’t need to create illusions to retract to from her reality. The structure of the scene highlights the conflict between Blanche and Stanley as Williams places the song which describes her desire
and dreams for Mitch and other characters to believe in her purity contrapuntally with Stanley’s revelations about Blanche’s past, which consequently creates tension.

In addition, the extended metaphor of bathing throughout the play is a salient symbol that exemplifies the idea that Blanche resorts to her fantasy world as an escape mechanism. She is described to be “frolicking in the tub” such puerile behaviour can be seen as Blanche reminiscing and reliving her childhood where she didn’t have to face such pernicious traumas, as well as depicting her innocence. Alternatively, it can also be perceived as Blanche attempting to ease herself from the intolerable burden and guilt she has from her past promiscuity. Thence, Williams indicates that Blanche’s obsession with cleanliness reinforces her desperate urge to not only purify her body but her soul too.

William’s illustrates Blanche’s continuous battles between reality and illusion through the stage directions as well, describing her to exert “breathless cries” and “peals of laughter”. This juxtaposition heightens how Blanche attempts to conceal her despair with mendacity. The phrase “breathless cries” suggests Blanche is at the pinnacle of disintegration whilst contrastingly, “peals of laughter” illustrates her suppressing her inner anxieties as well as reinforcing her innocence which consequently evokes pathos. Williams thusly manifests how Blanche uses illusions to provide her with momentary peace from the anxieties caused by her sordid past. This can be seen as her harnetia as these problems accumulate until she is unable to handle them leading to her downfall, which reinforces the destructive relationship between illusions and reality.

On the other hand, Stanley Kowalski represents realism. Williams’ portrays him as a dominant alpha male who juxtaposes Blanche in a similar way to how illusions juxtapose reality. Stanley makes a sarcastic remark comparing Blanche to a “canary-bird” which have the connotations of being beautiful and delicate. This metaphor has a satirical undertone as
it’s mocking how Blanche initially portrayed herself as delicate and dainty whereas her sordid past suggests otherwise. Moreover, there’s also deep irony embedded within this, as canary-birds are associated with freedom whereas Blanche’s true self is caged as she is unable to face her reality causing her to create a facade. The fact Stanley has discovered this foreshadows how she will not be able to maintain her facade for long and all her attempts to escape her reality and downfall are futile. During scene 7, Williams presents more of Stanley’s harsh personality whereby he exploits Blanche’s past. He derisively claims “‘sister Blanche is no lily’” and uses repeated sarcasm referring to Blanche as “‘Dame Blanche’”. The metaphor “‘lily’” illustrates how Stanley straightforwardly challenges Blanche’s reputation and continually breaks down the illusions she had created about herself being pure and virginal. He further claims Blanche had been “‘washed up like poison’”. This simile implies how Stanley perceives her as toxic and her initial portrayal of being innocent and pure was a facade and merely an attempt to disguise her fallacies with illusions. Furthermore, Tennessee Williams presents Stanley to take a systematic approach towards destroying Blanche’s illusions which is shown by the way he puts forwards his arguments in an orderly fashion “‘Lie Number One:….Lie Number Two:’”. This emphasises Stanley’s barbaric intention and determination to convince Stella and unravel the truth about Blanche’s past. Additionally, Stanley’s attempt to sound formal and legalistic is also shown within this, yet fails in conveying such an image of himself. Stella, however, is a mirror of the audience. She is in disbelief of what Stanley has to say and forcefully defends her sister stating “‘What-contemptible-lies!’” showing how despite such overwhelming evidence she remains loyal to her sister. Nonetheless, Stanley’s machismo and dominating personality manages to convince Stella in the end as she claims “‘this is making me sick’.” This creates a foreboding effect as it foreshadows Stanley’s success in stealing Blanche’s sanity by tearing down her
illusions. The fact Stella feels physically “sick” heightens the extent of how powerful and domineering Stanley’s realism is.

In conclusion, Tennessee Williams presents a harmful relationship between illusions and reality. Such contrasting themes have shown to create immense tension between Blanche and Stanley as Blanche creates a fantasy world to retreat from the harsh reality and her agonizing past which results dangerously as her mental state deteriorates and every last piece of hope she has is annihilated by Stanley’s menacing personality and need for realism.

Examiner commentary

AO1: The opening of the essay clearly identifies the scene’s place in the play, addressing its concerns to the task. Several links are made in the essay between features, both thematic and theatrical, found in the scene and in the play as a whole, showing quite a detailed understanding.

AO2: Williams’ use of singing within the dialogue is discussed well, considering too the metaphorical readings of the song lyrics. Similarly, the role of bathing is discussed, both within the scene and the play as a whole. This analysis of theatrical action is also seen in the discussion of other stage directions, while the contrasts apparent in Stanley’s dialogue are explored analytically. There is also useful discussion of the role of Stella in the scene. Analytical methods are used very well, integrating quotations successfully.
Task 1 Recreative
Exemplar 4
Level 5 response - 10 marks

Write a short section which fits into any part of the novel, where the older Stephen reflects on a particular event involving the younger Stephen. In the reflection, shift narrative perspective – in terms of both voice and time – imitating Frayn’s concerns and style in the novel.

Add a commentary which shows how your choices are appropriate as a recreation of Frayn’s writing.

Recreated Text: 352 words

Barbara smiles. “That’s nice,” she says and I smile back. We are sitting beside each other, but a yard’s distance separates us. “I mean, it must be nice,” she begins, but continues to pop and un-pop her blue purse, and the noise echoes in the tiny Lookout.

“If Deidre smokes and then kisses people, how can they be unpleasant? I don’t understand. Every one smokes, don’t they?” Barbara asks me. I shrug. Honestly, smoking is not a subject I focus on very much. I know Deidre smokes, Daddy does, as do soldiers… I just haven’t given the idea much thought before. If anything, I think of cigarettes to be repulsive, but maybe I am too young to appreciate them.

I had no concept of money, aging or the world. I was just a young boy, still being dressed by his mother and I was embarrassed by even the thought of a girl. Stephen was always overwhelmed by the presence of Barbara. Intimidated because he wanted to impress.

The Lookout is just as I remember … dull and familiar. Yet a vulgar smell has filled the air … it is reminiscent of the sodden cigarettes I made with Charlie Avery. We made them out of the tobacco ends we found in his parent’s ashtray, after I told him that I’d smoked time and time before.

The smell surrounding us is so strong it penetrates my nostrils, leaving my eyes sodden. Why is it demanding so harshly to be noticed? Perhaps I should remember what it is. Alas, I am too preoccupied to think.
Some things in the Lookout are reminiscent of the war; what seem to be old binoculars, a tin of biscuits, but importantly there is scatterings of propaganda posters, and the unspoken bombsite is on the other side of the cul-de-sac.

I still know its exact location from here. Walk straight, take a left at Auntie Dee’s house and then take an immediate right, and you can see the site from there. It was blocked off, but now it has been built over…you wouldn’t even know it was once in ruins.

Commentary: 670 words

Frayn’s novel explores the life of Stephen Wheatley, a boy growing up during World War II and the revelations that an older Stephen Wheatley discovers when reminiscing about his past during his visit back to his home town.

Frayn creates a tentative friendship between Stephen and a local girl named Barbara, who is chatty and adventurous. Barbara’s adventurous nature is presented upon when she introduces Stephen to smoking cigarettes, an act they will eventually carry out in secret. Their inexperience and lack of maturity is shown through Barbara questioning Stephen’s previous experience with cigarettes. I have similarly presented the pair’s lack of knowledge by Barbara questioning the appeal of cigarettes and Stephen’s experience - similar to how Frayn presents their unfamiliarity with smoking, thus depicting their uncertainty in their actions.

Frayn has written Spies with tense shifts between the narrative of younger and older Stephen to convey both memories and knowledge gained since childhood, thus I have recreated this style by creating a piece that includes Frayn’s tense shift. I chose to do this so I can comment on the surroundings of Stephen and Barbara from the viewpoint of older Stephen, as younger Stephen could not go into detail of his environment, but the older Stephen would, as he has not seen the Lookout or houses in decades. I have included the description that “The Lookout is just as [Stephen] remember[s]”, thus including the idea of eidetic memories. I have adapted the presentation of The Lookout’s “sweet, dull, ordinariness” that was noted at the beginning of the novel in to being “dull” and “familiar” By doing this, I have matched Frayn’s style of description and I have noted that throughout the novel, Frayn will use synonyms frequently.
The era that Frayn has based his novel upon is important to the novel’s progression, as the main plot of the novel is the idea that the younger Stephen believes Keith’s mother is in fact a German spy. Therefore, my recreated piece also notes the time, with an older Stephen commenting on the items surrounding the Lookout, “what seem to be old binoculars, a tin of biscuits, but importantly there is scatterings of propaganda posters”. Yet I have not gone into any detail about the war, as Frayn does not voice younger Stephen’s understanding, or fear. Aside from the “single, random bombsite” nearby, a reader is unaware of the real threat of Germans. Had I delved into the history of the bombsite and ruined in detail, it would have been out of place, plus the novel is set on the Homefront so what Stephen believed of the war was usually imaginary.

I have also recreated the way Frayn writes stylistically. I have observed that Frayn uses a variation of punctuation, ranging from ellipsis, italics and rhetorical questions throughout Spies. Frayn varies from short to longer sentences, dependant on the situation – he uses unbroken sentences filled with commas whilst telling a story, such as in the passage before my own when Barbara is talking about her mother – yet Frayn uses short, blunt sentences when describing actions: “I shrug,” or “I glance at her.” Usage of ellipsis is common device of Frayn’s, as it shows the reader Stephen’s stream of consciousness, thus I have also used ellipsis throughout my recreated piece to imitate Frayn’s style as well as continuing Stephen’s thoughts and feelings. I have used ellipsis throughout my piece to convey thoughts, an example of this has been in my fourth paragraph “… dull and familiar. Yet a vulgar smell has filled the air…”, similar to how Frayn uses ellipsis to link past memories to the present and continue on pre-existing thoughts, thus evidence of our similarities.

Lastly, I have imitated Frayn’s usage of rhetorical questions, where Stephen questions himself and his surroundings throughout the novel. I have used questions in order for older Stephen to test his own memory of his past. Through my recreated sentence of “Is it a scent I should remember?” I am imitating the way that Frayn leaves readers without immediate answers, as Stephen himself is unaware of what is surrounding him, and its importance. I am also allowing narrative development through Stephen’s lack of memory and knowledge.

Ultimately, I have attempted to recreate the style of Frayn through similar development of text through description, punctuation, changing of tense as well as creating and continuing the plot.
Examiner commentary

AO1: The role of the reminiscing narrator and slips into the past are recognised as key features of the novel's narrative and are imitated in the recreated passage, which also picks up well the key characters and their traits. The commentary's initial focus on the content of the episode shows a good understanding of the characters.

AO2: The narrative style is managed well with key aspects imitated, though not all is fully convincing and the imitation of Frayn's use of tense is not quite secure. Details of characteristic behaviour and dialogue are well observed and imitated. In the commentary there is good discussion of features of Frayn's style, including tense, and ways in which the novel explores memories. Points about sentence structures, punctuation and rhetorical questions are capable and observant.
Write a short scene to be placed after scene six of A Streetcar Named Desire, drawing on Williams’ characterisation of Blanche through other characters. Add a commentary which explains how your scene is characteristic of Williams’ style and concerns.

Scene

It is a late summer evening. STANLEY stalks through the through assorted clusters of people whilst MITCH ambles alongside him, basking in the artificial lights from the surrounding buildings. The hum of the flamboyantly lit street balances madness and beauty, chaos for those unacustomed to it. The pair’s dialogue is inaudible as they slip downstream, into the luracy of The Four Deuces. STANLEY wrestles through whilst MITCH clamours towards the bar like a drowning rat.

BARTENDER: What do you want?

STANLEY: Give us a second would you?! [STANLEY faces MITCH with an air of contempt arrogance] So, how was the date with young Blanche?

MITCH: Date didn’t go so well. You see I like her, she’s just got a lotta history. She’s an interesting lady, I’ll give her that. Maybe me and her should go out again. Get to feel her out a little more, you know.

[STANLEY begins to snicker playfully under his breath]

MITCH[defensively]: What you laughing at, huh?! See I know you got a problem with Blanche but-

STANLEY[interrupting pugnaciously]: Hey don’t get mad it me alright! It’s just funny, you callin’ her a lady.

MITCH: Huh? What’s funny ‘bout that? Blanche is a lady of the saunt so I’ll call her as much.

STANLEY: See that’s what’s so funny to me, [STANLEY playfully nudges MITCH] ladies wouldn’t, do what I heard that Blanche has been up to, ‘fere she came here to Elysian Fields. [STANLEY picks up a peanut from the bowl and tosses it into his mouth, crushing it between his teeth].

MITCH: Cut it out, Stan! Tell me what’s going on here!

STANLEY[with an air of confrontation]: Listen, Mitch. You’ve been like a brother to me these past few years, so I gotta protect you. Blanche isn’t the classy woman what she seems! Back when she lost that fancy mansion she moved to a hotel, The Flamingo. She was sleepin’ around, Mitch. Sellin’ herself.
Write a short scene to be placed after scene six of A Streetcar Named Desire, drawing on Williams’ characterisation of Blanche through other characters. Add a commentary which explains how your scene is characteristic of Williams’ style and concerns.

[MITCH’s expression reflects a conscious of fear and shock, though he gradually begins to acknowledge what STANLEY is telling him]

STANLEY: Listen, I ain’t Stella yet so you gotta swear you won’t tell, not even Pablo and Steve – I gotta be the one to tell.

[MITCH pushes against the bar, seeking it in frustration before turning away, staggering as if a bear shot by a hunter. The sound of the locomotive is heard in the distance]

Commentary

The text takes place following the scene between Blanche and Mitch – Stanley and Mitch walk to The Four Deuces. In the scene, Stanley reveals to Mitch the promiscuous nature of her history in Laurel. The scene develops the insensitive and aggressive behaviour of Stanley whilst placing focus on his loyalty. Mitch depicted as a profoundly sensitive contrast. Meanwhile, Blanche’s absence characterises the lack of control she has throughout the play; Stanley revealing her past continues the recurrent theme of masculine control over women and their fate in the tragic genre. For example, in the original text when Stanley reveals Blanche’s past to Stella, her sister: “Well, he’s not going to marry her. Maybe he was, but he’s not going to jump in a tank with a school of sharks – now!”. Blanche is depicted as a woman demanding simple human contact, whilst Mitch’s emotional turmoil at the end of the play illustrates their fundamental difference in what they desire from a relationship.

For example, Mitch’s proclamation that ‘[Blanche’s] not clean enough to bring in the house with my mother’ illustrates Blanche’s desperate search for sexual gratification, contrasted with Mitch’s need to find a stable and traditional partner.

The use of location in the episode aims to juxtapose the unequal representation of female against male characters through the absence of Blanche, who is restrained to the confines of the apartment as she descends into madness, whilst male characters have access to freedom unrestrained human socialisation and alcohol consumption. The overcrowded street (“STANLEY stalks through the assorted clusters of people”) contrasts the serene loneliness of the apartment illustrated throughout the original text: “The view through the big windows is fading gradually into a still-golden dusk”. This is a direct contrast to the characteristics bestowed by Blanche,
Write a short scene to be placed after scene six of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, drawing on Williams’ characterisation of Blanche through other characters. Add a commentary which explains how your scene is characteristic of Williams’ style and concerns.

confined both to a small apartment and to the social incarcerations of being an upper-class woman – her alcoholic tendencies concealed with her social life now quiet and lonesome. Additionally, the use of this location places focus on a location unseen in the original text to exploring the locations outside of the apartment, unseen by Blanche and the audience. For example, ‘The blind are leading the blind’, a quote spoken by Blanche, illustrates her resistance to the world outside the apartment.

Many of the symbols used by Williams throughout the original text are mirrored; the scene features the motif of the locomotive (‘The sound of the locomotive is heard’), a bold and powerful industrial image signifying the transition from old to new America, used in the play to represent Stanley’s destruction of Blanche (whom embody ‘new’ and ‘old’ American values, respectively); for example, Stanley’s well-connected social brand contrasts with Blanche’s outdated isolationism – “Have you ever heard of the Napoleonic code?”. Here, it signifies Stanley’s destruction of Blanche’s reputation as well as her relationship with Mitch and hope for beginning a life in ‘modern’ America, a critical interpretation postulated by various critics.

Furthermore, the use of bright lights continues the motif established by Williams in the original text – Blanche is hostile towards light as it reveals her physically aging appearance, “And turn that over-light off! Turn that off! I won’t be looked at in this merciless glare!” whilst representing those around Blanche uncovering the realities behind her false appearances. In the piece, contrary to Blanche, Stanley relishes in the light (“Tasking is the bright artificial lights”) as he prepares to metaphorically ‘shine light’ on Blanche’s past, whilst simultaneously demonstrating his ease within this environment in comparison to Blanche. It is noted in the extract that the light is “chaos for those unaccustomed to it”, implying Blanche’s insensitivity and aversion to light.

In the original text, Stanley’s degrading remarks about Blanche create an atmosphere interspersed with comedy – stereotypically crude humour associated with a group of working class friends; “Hurry back and we’ll fix you a sugar-tit” (here employing an innuendo), the emphasis here illustrating the mocking nature of Stanley and his treatment of women (abrasive and rude), misstated in the extract: “It’s just funny, you callin’ her a lady”. Stanley’s behaviour and language presents a psychologically realistic characterisation of males, contrasted with the striking departure from realism in the staging (overwhelmingly bright and colourful lights). Furthermore, Stanley is in an assertive position over Mitch to further demonstrate his dominance and authority throughout his
Write a short scene to be placed after scene six of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, drawing on Williams’ characterisation of Blanche through other characters. Add a commentary which explains how your scene is characteristic of Williams’ style and concerns.

Interactions with both men, within his friendship group, and women in the confines of the apartment (as seen in the original text: “Why don’t you women go up and sit with Benice”), for example, in the line “Hey don’t disrespect me alright!”, dialogue which lacks punctionation to illustrate how Stanley’s behaviour is passionate and unreserved. Stanley is described using a semantic field relating him to a predator animal, ‘hunching’ through the crowd, whilst Mitch is compared to a ‘drowning rat’, each relating to their levels of masculinity respectively.

Mitch’s simple jokes reflect his naivety and further the presentation of working class men as undeveloped. In the context of the play, the language of Stanley and Mitch alike differs greatly from that of Blanche, illustrating the contrast between how socially.

Examiner commentary

AO1: The characters and the relationship between them are envisaged very successfully in the recreated scene, demonstrating an excellent understanding of Williams’ concerns, dialogue and stagecraft. The commentary discusses the placing of the scene within the action and concerns of the play successfully, making key connections to the original play.

AO2: The recreation is very successful, incorporating finely observed details of stage directions, characterisation and dialogue. It is a convincingly recreated scene. In the commentary, setting, character and symbolism are discussed in detail and there is precision in the section on Williams’ use of light. Justification is given for recreative choices with careful references to a number of specific details in the original text.
Task 1 Recreative
Exemplar 6
Level 6 response - 15 marks
realised that you are drowning in melancholia. (Pause) So, dear old Dad: why don’t you just end it all?

(Pause)

MAX: He talks to me about living.

(Pause)

MAX lights a cigarette.

MAX: I would offer you one but you don’t want it.

(Pause)

MAX comes closer to TEDDY

MAX: Lovely woman, that whore of yours. You must be very happy together.

MAX turns to leave.

TEDDY: She’s just as lovely as Mum.

(Pause)

MAX: Mention my Jessie again and I’ll suck your eyes out.

MAX leaves the room.

TEDDY stands for a second before going to the sideboard and placing the plate back inside it.

TEDDY goes upstairs, sound of a door opening and closing. UL lights turn off.

Silence.

Work Cred: "Pinter climax"

As 1.2. Clear sense of how Pinter scenes unfold towards the climax of their form.

"Silence". Unspoken tensions, typical language features are identified and used in a fluent + believable manner.
Pinter Commentary

This scene comes in between the vignette ending on page 100 with the stage directions “BLACKOUT”, and the subsequent set piece beginning on line 101 with “LIGHTS UP”. This scene serves to both show Teddy’s state after witnessing his wife kiss both of his brothers, and explore the relationship between Max and Teddy.

I have begun the scene with the Pinteresque use of vague stage directions, using the indefinite article, “a” (“sound of a door opening and closing”, “goes to a sideboard”) to create both a sense of ambiguity in the scene, but emulate the opening stage directions to “The Homecoming” in which Pinter describes “an old house in North London” and “a large room”. The use of the indefinite article reminds the audience that what may unfold in front of them can happen in any home, rather than the more specific settings of a J.B.Priestly play, for example.

The scene depicts a shift in register for Teddy. At first Teddy is seen as somewhat evasive; he responds to Max with nothing, before stating the non-sequitur of “I thought you’d gone out” the non-sequitur being a hallmark of Pinter’s plays and showing how Teddy is eager to move the conversation on; and the pauses indicating how Teddy does not wish to answer his father. However, after Max uses Teddy’s birth name, “Theodore”, the tone of Teddy’s behaviour shifts towards the more provocative. This change in register is seen earlier in the play, except in reverse. Ruth calls Lenny “Leonard” and the power shifts in their confrontation, with Ruth becoming more dominant and Lenny becoming meeker. Teddy “pours himself a glass or water” and assumes that Max does not want one, stating that “[Max is] not thirsty” in restricting Max’s choice in the matter Teddy gains more power in the scene, not to dissimilar to when Lenny pours Ruth a drink despite her stating that she does not want one. Teddy then launches into a monologue savaging Max. I have aimed to combine both Teddy’s background as a professor of philosophy and his anger at his wife in this monologue. Teddy poses a philosophical question that I have lifted from Albert Camus’ essay on the Absurd and suicide (with the “discernable link between the question of suicide and the...meaning of life” being the crux of the essay) and uses it to craft a brutal point against Max, asking why he doesn’t “just end it all”. As Camus is very much the main Influence of Absurdist playwrights such as Beckett or Ionesco, who in turn Pinter was influenced by, I feel it appropriate to incorporate his ideas into a monologue made by a philosopher.

I also feel that I have captured the character of Max well in this scene, with his contradictory nature and violent temperament being well presented. Max refers to Lenny in a relatively pleasant tone, calling him Teddy’s “sweet baby brother”, which contrasts heavily with Max’s negative jabs about Lenny earlier in the play as he exclaims that he will “chop [his] spine off” with the use of the comedy of menace also being echoed in my scene as Max says that he will “suck [Teddy’s] eyes out”. Furthermore, Max states how he is “no criminal”. He may not be criminally inclined now, but he certainly alludes to his criminal past when he reminisces how he and Macgregor “were two of the worst hated men in the West End of London”. These contradictions are seen throughout “The Homecoming”, for example when says that the family should “live in the present” despite Max’s fixation with the past.

In my scene I have tried to capture the dysfunctional nature and constant power struggle in the family of “The Homecoming” in what I hope is an appropriate and sophisticated register.

This is outstanding work in both script and commenting. The commentary uses technical terms (foil) and is focused on analysis of language and structure throughout (foil). Understanding of the original text is very evident and overall a coherent command of Pinter’s style and intentions.
Examiner commentary

AO1: In both style and concern, the recreated scene shows an excellent understanding of the relationship between Max and Ted and some of the key concerns of the play as a whole. Characterisation is consistent with Pinter’s text. The commentary places this new scene precisely within the play and demonstrates and advanced appreciation of Pinter’s characteristic concerns and dramatic techniques. It is crisp and coherently directed.

AO2: The structure and language of the dialogue, interspersed with appropriate stage directions, show keen understanding of Pinter’s dramatic techniques, balancing repulsiveness and horrific humour. The choices of detail made are located by specific references back in the original text, exploring Pinter’s ambiguity, tone and characterisation. Details of both Pinter and the recreated scene are discussed perceptively.
Task 2 Comparative
Exemplar 7
Level 3 response - 10 marks

Compare the ways in which Butterworth and McEwan express dissatisfaction with aspects of contemporary Britain in Jerusalem and Saturday

Butterworth and McEwan choose to use important events to set their story in then blur them in the background. The Flintlock fair and a demonstration against the US 2003 invasion of Iraq, event which neither protagonists attend but both author are still able use to explore life in contemporary Britain.

Johnny ‘Rooster’ Byron, the anti-hero of Jerusalem, is stuck in his own word unable to accept or stop the changes he is force to undergo. Johnny comment how ‘The world turns. And it turns. And it moves and you don’t. You’re still here.’ which indicated his inability to accept change. Butterworth makes Johnny aware of the world as the repetition of ‘turn’ and lexical choice of ‘moves’ instead of another ‘turn’ emphasis the force of the changing world that Johnny is unable handle. ‘Moves’ also suggest an active or conscious action whereas ‘turn’ suggest a force that need to be pushed. Perhaps the change in word choice signifies Johnny’s change of his view point on the world. The uses of ‘you’ instead of a personal pronoun distance Johnny from the topic which may uncover his remorse, regret or denial in staying. In contrast to the Flintlock fair which is continuing to take place even if they lost their main attraction - Johnny’s dare devil act - his home still and unmoving, never changing it purpose to entertain bored and young teenagers with drugs, alcohol and pointless chatter.

In Saturday, McEwan uses his character, Henry Perowne, to gives the reader a favourable impression of the city;

“Henry thinks the city is a success, a brilliant invention, a biological masterpiece—millions teeming around the accumulated and layered achievements of the centuries.”

Word such as ‘masterpiece’ ‘achievement’ ‘brilliant’ and ‘harmonious’ suggest not just an appreciation of the world, but reveals a satisfaction of being a part of it, until the ‘sewage’ was turned into ‘instant forget’. It’s clear that Henry, as Stephen Metcalf describe as a man of strict limits² it not so strict as to remember the more distasteful parts of the city. Just like Johnny’s denial to ‘move’ with the world, Henry’s refusal to acknowledge the unwanted parts of the city keeps him in one continuous mind frame. This inability to move on or accept the world is reflected in the endings of both texts. Johnny attempts to summons giants to help him stop the being evicted while Henry sleeps with his wife similar to the start of the novel. Johnny’s refusal to end while Henry’s never-ending lifestyle expresses their desire to stay the same: unchanging. This conflicts with the always changing contemporary Britain, in fashion, political moments, artists’ styles, landscape, technology, etcetera...

The poem Jerusalem by William Blake used in Jerusalem and Dover beach by Matthew Arnold used in Saturday are key texts which subtly mirror the desire of both protagonists. Both poems immortalise a natural part of Britain which give credit to their
unchanging scenery under threat by an unknown force. In Jerusalem, the ‘dark satanic hills’ may be gentrification of what Johnny refers to as ‘a English forest’. Where as in Saturday, the ‘ignorant armies’ may be Baxter and his lackeys invading Henry’s home. The stress on the word ‘English’ makes the forest a part of British heritage, an important and significant site that symbolises the history and culture of England. In anger Johnny shouts ‘what the fuck is an English forest for’ as if to remind the council of their ancestral medieval lineage. However the council still pursue disregarding any claim to their forest. They prefer to have a contemporary neighbourhood in exchange for their history and culture; as the poem Jerusalem is also considered a part of ‘English’ literature also puts an emphasis on the importance of the forest. This makes Johnny akin to a guardian of the forest, as it seem that only he cares for the way of life in the forest. It been made clear that Johnny doesn’t lack money (not only does he exchange his blood for £500 a month, he also make money from selling drugs and painting houses), and his boosting of knowledge in game of cards with the kids clearly show his interest in knowing about British culture. Like the Jerusalem, Dover beach represents an inheritance of culture. Baxter, the protagonist, immediately calm down after hearing the poem as Daisy’s self-proclaimed work. Although Henry suggest that his extreme reactions is a by-product of his disease, he dose accept that the poem did have an effect on his emotions.

“Poetry balances itself on the pinprick of the moment. Slowing down, stopping yourself completely, to read and understand a poem is like trying to acquire an old-fashioned skill.”

Here he appreciates the effect of poetry as ‘old-fashioned’ implies it to be a noble art rather than some out-dated skill. Before this point Henry would belittle the art form and would only see the world through a quite narrow-minded view point. Perhaps it because he lacked the ‘slowing down’ effect found when reading poetry which did not enabled him to read a situation in different perspectives, a common occurrence in the divided between the science and humanitarian subjects. However, it clears from this point onwards his appreciation for the art has increased.

Family plays an important role in literature but in contemporary Britain the traditional model of family has been over thrown by high rate of divorce. Johnny is a prime example of a new model of family as he doesn’t live with his son or his (now) ex-partner. Nor does he have any concerns over his son’s upbringing. He holds no responsibility towards his son as he forgets his promise to take him to the fair. The only time we seen Johnny acting like a father is when he tells him about his special blood which he inherited. This is the only fatherly scene we see, as if he is handing down a precious heirloom, or some sort of legacy. Rather than the role of the father, we see Johnny more as a mythical being, a trickster or piper like character. He invokes or rather satisfies a rekindling, if not of nationalism, then certainly of a sense of belonging. It feels as if he is the symbol that has become the core of British identity. In comparison to Troy, a man obsessed with family. In his frantic search for his step daughter, Phaedra, he beats and brands Johnny for hiding her
**Examiner commentary**

**AO1:** Writing errors are immediately apparent in the essay and hamper the clear communication of ideas. The essay shows knowledge of some aspects of the plot of both texts, with references. The focus of paragraphs is relevant though the overall argument lacks coherence. The texts are grasped at a straightforward level.

**AO2:** There is some focus on individual words though their place within the wider text’s development is not always clear. The essay does not acknowledge the differences in genre between the texts.

**AO3:** The Iraq invasion is mentioned at the beginning of the essay. References to contemporary Britain are not supported, though there is an attempt to deal with heritage through poetry. There is some understanding.

**AO4:** Though the texts are discussed together, focused comparison is not developed. There is an attempt to compare.

**AO5:** There is a brief reference to Metcalf on Saturday. This aspect of the essay is clearly limited.
‘Every person is defined by the community they belong to’

Compare how the role of identity within a community is portrayed in ‘Translations’ and ‘Brooklyn’.

Identity can be defined as the characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is. A community can be defined as a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common. In Brian Friel’s ‘Translations’ and Colm Toibin’s ‘Brooklyn’, the theme of identity and belonging somewhere is common in both pieces of literature. They explore how the characters develop a sense of identity and try to uncover who they truly are; whether that is the language they speak or where they live. ‘Translations’ explores how language is key to having an identity and defines who you are. Friel sets his play in 19th century Ireland which was still and English colony. Even though there were attempts of independence, Ireland was still a Gaelic speaking country. The novel ‘Brooklyn’ follows the journey of Ellis who moves to the diverse city of Brooklyn to start a life as she leaves behind the small town of Enniscorthy.

Ellis is the youngest daughter in her family with her older sister Rose acting as the patronal figure in the family as she is the one with the highest paying job and provides for the family. Compared to her sister Rose who already has a rewarding job and has a lifestyle set out for her, Ellis is still trying to find her way. She admires her sister and observes her ways as in the opening of the novel in the first paragraph she ‘watched rose crossing the street from sunlight to shade’. This could also be foreshadowing Rose’s premature death later in the novel. Ellis has a traditional Irish name whereas ‘Rose’ has been given the English version of Roisin. Rose was originally a Norman form of a German. It fell out of use during the Middle Ages but was revived during the 19th Century while still regarded as being a flower name. This name has connotations of beauty; much like the reasons why Ellis idolises her. Rose is more Anglicised. The name of a person immediately reveals a part of identity that they can’t control as their name is given to them. Compared to Ellis, Rose is described as wearing a ‘cream coloured cardigan’ and Ellis watches her as she ‘applied lipstick and applied eye makeup’. Perhaps this echoes Ellis’ longing to become her own person as she sees her sister as someone who knows who she is and the way she carries herself is perhaps inspiring for Ellis. The detailed mentioning that Tobin places here of what Rose is wearing create the image of status and belonging somewhere in society. The unsophisticated written style of ‘Brooklyn’ is reflective of the protagonist. The simplicity of Ellis’ personality echoes the straight forward nature of the book and we clearly get a perspective of the novel through Ellis’ eyes. Rose already knows who she is and what she has to do in order to make a living, the idea of Ellis being so observant is because she longs to finally be something like her sister and perhaps finds this unexpectedly when moving to Brooklyn and after the premature death of her sister. With Ellis now having the decision of whether she stays in Ireland or goes back to Brooklyn relies on her. She could easily stay in Ireland and take over her sister’s job and be a part of Jim’s respectable family but the fact that she decides to move back to Brooklyn shows that she finally becomes her own person and knows who she wants to be.

In the setting of the beginning of act one in ‘Translations’, Friel goes into quite a lot of detail about the scene and touches on the personalities of the characters. Sarah is one of the characters who mainly struggles with identity in the play. She can barely speak and therefore can hardly communicate. It is described that ‘Sarah’s speech defect is so bad that all her life she has been the considered locally to be dumb and she has accepted this’. The idea of her just ‘accepting’ that she is dumb and can hardly communicate mirrors how alone she is and that without being able to
communicate, you are no one. When Manus is trying to encourage Sarah to speak he says ‘Nobody’s listening. Nobody hears you’. This echoes the idea that she is no body, that no one hears her because she is no one. Manus sounds quite pitiful and feels sorry for her. Sarah only manages to say one of the things that an audience watching would consider mundane and simple. With persistence from Manus, Sarah finally is able to say ‘My name is Sarah’ a common phrase which most people learn when they are young children. Again this mirrors her outsider role in the community. Sarah is a direct contrast to the character of Jimmy Jack. His ability of being able to speak fluently in Greek although may be impressive, the fact that he is the only one to have that ability makes him an outsider as well. Even though there is a contrast between them, the idea that even when you are able to communicate and have a unique identity such as Jimmy Jack, you are, to an extent seen as an outsider and a misfit. Although he does know how to speak and communicate he, like Sarah and most of the characters, they are misfits in their own way.

After, moving to Brooklyn to better her prospects, Ellis feels alone and alienated in the new culture provided. Even though she stays in a boarding house with other Irish girls, she is still far from her home in Ennisclorthy, forcing her to come out of her comfort zone to an extent. Before arriving in Brooklyn, her roommate Georgina ensures that she looks presentable before leaving the boat and ‘She made Ellis...select suitable attire... We don’t want you looking like a tart’. Georgina is trying to create an appearance and new identity for Ellis so that she fits in with the attire of Brooklyn and makes sure she looks like she knows what she is doing. This was because at the time of people migrating to Brooklyn, many people would be prevented from entering the country and actually sent back if they looked ill or were actually sick as the authorities didn’t want illnesses to be spread so in some cases they could actually be sent all the way back to Ireland. Father Flood describes to Ellis before leaving that ‘parts of Ireland are just like Brooklyn’ echoing that she shouldn’t be hesitant to leave Ennisclorthy because it’s just like home. However, this juxtaposes the views of Maire in Translations who wants to leave and go to America because it’s different and new, not the same culture. It then describes the clothing Ellis wears starting with a ‘white dress’ and ‘a plain cardigan’. Coincidentally, the clothes she wears resemble the ones that Rose wears at the start of the novel. This is perhaps trying to give Ellis a sophisticated identity and sets her up for her journey in Brooklyn. Again, like Rose, Georgina puts some ‘eye liner...some rouge and mascara’ on Ellis and claims they’ll be afraid to stop you’. This is a complete opposite look to what Ellis would wear in Ireland; her sister would be the one more likely to look like this. This gives Brooklyn the image of being a lot more glamorous lifestyle and Ellis has to be a contrast of her just to enter the country.

Owen tries to convert place names from Irish to English. Martine Pelletier says that the Ordinance Survey map ‘acts a powerful metaphor of the transformation of linguistic and cultural environment’. Yolland recognises that indeed it is a ‘transformation’ but perhaps for the worse as he then continues to explain that actually ‘something’s being eroded’ mirroring the destruction of land. Yolland and Maire develop a relationship with each other but struggle due to the huge language barrier that defines them and the differing cultures that make them different people. Maire wants to move from Ireland to America, similar to that of Ellis in ‘Brooklyn’. She explains to Jimmy Jack that the English language will be ‘better’ for her and ‘fit’ her, rather than the language of Latin. This mirrors that she views English as being the positive step to being more modern and up to date. They both unintentionally repeat what the other is saying only because they don’t understand what they saying. This presents Yolland as the outsider as he cannot speak the language of locals but claims to have fallen in love with the country down to his romantic personality and strengthens the point that
a person is defined by which community they belong to. Without knowing they repeat what they say as Maire says ‘the grass must be wet. My feet are soaking’ whilst Yolland says ‘Your feet must be wet. The grass is soaking’. Maire, although she does not deny her Irish origins, sees the English language as the language of progress and modernity and sees Gaelic as the language of the past and stagnation even though she does not understand a word Yolland says to her. They make and attempt at a conversation with hand gestures and they base their attraction off one another through looks and identity but not what they are truly like considering they can’t understand or communicate with each other at all. Despite the audience knowing the simplicity of what they are saying as the play is set in English, the irony is that neither of them understands that they are actually saying the same thing to each other. The idea of Yolland, a lover of the country and area, not being able to fit into the community and then the idea of Maire; who grew up in Baile Beag is longing to leave and better her prospects by moving to America and change her identity.

In conclusion, both authors use themes of identity to shape their play or novel. They do this by using language and appearance to see how the identity of a person becomes an important factor of knowing who they are. They explore how the identity of a person is shaped by their upbringing and how that can change the aspirations of the characters for example Maire. For Ellis however, her realisation of her identity is only when she leaves for Brooklyn and is isolated and forced to find her own.

Word count: 1,746

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Examiner commentary

AO1: The essay’s opening creates a clear foundation for the essay, addressing texts and task directly. The approach to the texts is through character rather than characterisation and neither is fully considered from a literary standpoint. The shifts between paragraphs are sometimes sudden without linking or developing ideas. There is, though, an overall competent understanding of the texts.

AO2: A sense of genre of the texts is lacking, with little discrimination between stage directions and dialogue when discussing Sarah in Translations and little exploration of narrative. A reference to the ‘unsophisticated written style’ of Brooklyn is not exemplified or analysed. There is awareness of the novel's structure through a reference to foreshadowing, and a discussion of nomenclature. There is also a note on the repetitions in dialogue in a scene from the play. Quotations are well integrated but tend to be used illustratively, missing opportunities for analysis.

AO3: The initial contexts are established in the first paragraph and there is reference to the Ordnance Survey mapping of Ireland, showing some understanding of the significance of contexts, but not in a developed way.

AO4: The paragraphs move logically between the texts, though the separation of the texts in their own paragraphs limits the development of comparison. Actual connections are only made in the first and final paragraphs.

AO5: There is reference to Pelletier on Translations with some application to the argument. Despite the extensive bibliography, this aspect of the essay is limited.
Task 2 Comparative
Exemplar 9
Level 6 response - 25 marks

Compare the writers use of nature and the natural in *Never Let Me Go* and *Selected Poems*.

Robert Frost stated ‘I am not a nature poet. There is almost always a person in my poems’, demonstrating that in *Selected Poems* the theme of nature and the natural is used primarily to explore human nature itself, an aspect that is also clear in Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel *Never Let Me Go*. Nature can be seen as constituting the physical world around us and the products of the earth, equally, ‘natural’ can be defined as a quality existing in or derived from nature. In *Selected Poems* and *Never Let Me Go* the question of whether it is a natural for humans to accept or attempt to delay death is explored in depth with the many conflicting aspects of the survival instinct emphasised by both writers. The conflict between man and the natural world was a prominent issue exemplified by the context of industrialisation in Frost’s America, and the advancements in science when Ishiguro published *Never Let Me Go*, and consideration of the repercussions of these developments is demonstrated within both works.

Both Ishiguro and Frost recognise the emotions associated with woods as a symbol of escape and use this to explore the situation in which the narrator or characters live. Priscilla Paton argues that in Frost’s poetry we see the heritage of the idealised simple life set against the increasing urban condescension towards and fear of the rustic natural world that characterised the early 20th Century.1 In *The Wood Pile*, the narrator describes the ‘tall slim trees// Too much alike to mark or name a place’. The speaker’s confusion upon discovering a rotting wood pile is reflected in the complex nature of the forest, where man is at the mercy of the natural world. In *Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening*, the woods are ‘lovely dark and deep’ posing a fatal but tempting oblivion for the speaker. The narrator is outside the woods looking in, and this sense of liminality is emphasised as the speaker appears to be poised in-between the natural wilderness of the woods and the world of humanity represented by the village where the owner of the woods lives. Ishiguro also uses woods as a symbol of escape that is ultimately rejected in *Never Let Me Go*. The students’ fear of the ‘looming’ woods that ‘cast a shadow’ over Hailsham, critic Diane Crimp argues, is due to the fact that the woods reflect the suppressed awareness of the clones ultimate fate that overshadows their childhood,2 with the woods symbolising the possibility of escape. Ishiguro and Frost highlight that nature can overwhelm in its physical appearance and in the feelings that it evokes, with woods presented as a place of confrontation and contemplation.

Pathetic fallacy, the attribution of human feelings and responses to the weather or seasons, is used by both Frost and Ishiguro to indicate the frame of mind of the narrator. Frost first developed an interest in natural history and theories of evolution during the early 1890s, and this interest in nature’s cycle lies at the heart of many of his poems.3 In *The Road Not Taken*, the narrator describes the ‘yellow wood’, thus it is likely to be Autumn, a season when the natural world begins to either hibernate or die. Nina Baym states that Fall in Frost’s poetry is a process which continues through

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all seasons indicating approaching death. As *The Road Not Taken* is told in retrospect it can be seen that the narrator is looking back on the decisions made in life once death is nearing. Similarly in *Stopping By Woods* the narrator visits the forest on the ‘darkest evening of the year’ making the wood’s seductive escape even more tempting. The romantic description of the ‘easy wind and downy flake’ creates a sense that the natural world is seducing man, with an appearance of peace and tranquility that is ultimately fatal. In *Never Let Me Go* Kathy looks back at her memories at Hailsham and mentions that on frequent occasions ‘the sun was glinting’. This can be seen as indicative that she is an unreliable narrator, perhaps changing her memory of the weather to reflect how fondly she recalls certain memories. The arrival of Madame carries a sense of foreboding, as it occurs when ‘a few storm clouds (are) starting to gather’, suggesting that the event is not looked on positively by Kathy in retrospect and that it will, like a storm, have significant repercussions. There is also a liminality with the weather described as ‘windy and sunny’ reflecting the fact that the clones are on a boundary of realisation that comes when they understand that ‘Madame was afraid of us’ indicating that nature, in particular the weather, can effectively reflect man’s moods and feelings.

The relationship between humans and the natural world is regularly explored by Frost and Ishiguro, with both often presenting it as a largely negative association despite the starkly different form of *Selected Poems* as a collection of Frost’s poetry and *Never Let Me Go* as a novel. Frost often uses nature imagery in order to discuss the natural world’s relationship with man. In contrast, Ishiguro’s exploration of their relationship is done primarily through his idea of cloning which in itself indicates human dominance over the natural world. The importance of setting in Frost’s poetry is first and foremost in revealing man’s isolation and his weakness in the face of vast, impersonal forces. In “Out, Out -” the sublime of the natural world, that is being overwhelmed in the face of something much bigger than ourselves, is demonstrated by the ‘Five mountain ranges one behind the other’/Under the sunset far into Vermont’ emphasising the insignificance of human life in the face of the environment. Critic Harold Bloom argues that Frost presents nature as indifferent to man, nevertheless, in the *The Ax Helve*, the narrator describes when ‘an interfering branch// Of alder catch my lifted ax… to hold my hand// From striking at another alder’s roots’. Frost presents the natural world as protecting itself from the threat posed by humankind suggesting that nature is responsive to humans and their actions. In the opening line of *Stopping by Woods*, the narrator immediately refers to man’s perceived ownership of the environment with the phrase ‘Whose woods these are I think I know’, implying human control over nature. Frost gained an understanding of a farmer’s relationship with the natural world during the nine years he worked as a largely unsuccessful farmer. In *The Ax Helve*, the character of Baptiste discusses the poor quality of the ax as it was ‘Made on machine’ alluding to the problems posed by the increasing industrialisation and exploitation of nature in America during the early 20th Century. Only when ‘the lines of a good helve// Were native to the grain’, thus when man works with nature, is the product of better quality than the artificial equivalent. Arguably for readers of *Selected Poems*

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in the 21st Century Frost’s presentation of the struggles between nature and man are accentuated. In recent years, humans have increasingly dominated over the natural world with the accelerated use of toxic fossil fuels leading to the growing issue of climate change, problems that were only entering human awareness when Frost was initially writing. The clones in Never Let Me Go have parallels to the ax in The As Helve as both are artificially created by man, and are arguably not of equal ‘quality’ to humans that are created naturally. Never Let Me Go was written during a time when scientific advances were becoming increasingly controversial. The success of the ‘Dolly the Sheep’ experiment in 1996 made the possibility of human clones presented in Never Let Me Go more feasible. As a dystopian novel, Never Let Me Go focuses on a society in which human cloning is the norm, and arguably the relevance of the novel has been heightened for readers today. The tension between nature and humankind has been further exemplified as science has moved closer to the possibility of human cloning than when the novel was initially published in 2005, primarily through the controversial use of stem cells for medical purposes.

Both Frost and Ishiguro consider the role of the natural world in indicating human mortality and the limits on human power. In Never Let Me Go Ishiguro raises the question if the clones themselves are ‘natural’, alluding to the many ethical dilemmas surrounding human exploitation of nature and genetics. In her distinctively matter-of-fact tone, Kathy points out that each of the clones ‘was copied at some point from a normal person’. The very existence of clones reflects humans’ unnatural attempts to control the uncontrollable course of life and death. Anne Whitehead argues that human fear of the clones is ambivalently suspended between a natural repulsion toward the clones themselves and a denial of the mortality that they represent. 

Frost also presents mankind’s fear of the natural world as due to the fact that the environment confirms human mortality. The speaker in The Wood Pile when confronted with the natural world, attempts to organise its disorder, describing the ‘cord of maple’ and ‘four by four by eight’ wood pile. Ultimately mother nature is more powerful than man, claiming buck the wood pile from human interference as ‘Clamatis// Had wound strings round and round it’. Both Selected Poems and Never Let Me Go point to human fear when confronted by nature, as it is a visual indicator of the limited realities of human life and power. Frost and Ishiguro also describe man’s response to such threats, whether it be the denial of those receiving the clones’ organs or the narrator’s attempt to exert control over nature in The Wood Pile.

One of the most pertinent questions posed for the reader in Never Let Me Go and Selected Poems is whether it is a natural human quality to accept or even welcome death, or to attempt to delay it. In Never Let Me Go, those whom the clones donate their organs to are ‘trying to cling onto life’ and the clones exist for the sole purpose of delaying death, exposing human attempts to prevent the inevitable. Kathy’s statement that ‘I’ll welcome the chance to rest’ and acceptance of her predetermined fate without protest after the failure of the deferral, has parallels to Frost’s narrator in Stopping By Woods. The speaker repeats ‘And miles to go before I sleep’, alluding to the welcome of a chance to escape the toil and work of everyday life through death, although the haunting repetition of the line may denote their decision to resist temptation or express their indecision about

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the choices. Despite attempts at rebellion, Ruth, Tommy and Kathy's acceptance of their fate is perhaps one of the most unnatural aspects of their existence. Ishiguro himself, however, pointed out that it is tempting for readers to naturally distance themselves from the clones by defining their lack of rebellion as a natural feature of their condition. Throughout history, humans have shown an ability to adapt to and accept terrible atrocities, suggesting that the clones' acceptance of premature death is not completely unnatural. In the film adaptation of *Never Let Me Go*, Kathy watches Tommy on the operating table before what will be his final donation, a scene which is not in the novel. The director, Mark Romanek, clearly wanted to emphasise their somewhat unnatural lack of protest as Tommy and Kathy calmly accept their fate with their survival instinct virtually non-existent by this point.

Ultimately, the use of nature imagery is more evident in *Selected Poems* than in *Never Let Me Go*, nevertheless, when discussed nature and the natural are ideas used by both Frost and Ishiguro to highlight that confrontation with the environment can force us to contemplate our own existence. Both writers point to the constant struggles between man and the natural world, with each constantly trying to dominate over the other. Frost points to the fact that when nature and man work in harmony the product is of better quality; in contrast, Ishiguro's discussion of this power struggle through the use of cloning is in itself indicative of man's overpowering exploitation of nature. Nature and the natural are discussed in *Selected Poems* and *Never Let Me Go* both in their tangible form such as imagery of the natural world, and in their intangible form, that is the qualities that constitute human nature, primarily how humans accept or reject the predetermined nature of life. Frost often leaves his discussion of these ideas on a more ambiguous note, whereas Ishiguro explicitly presents a world where man constantly finds ways to evade death predominantly through the use of clones. Kathy, Tommy and Ruth's acceptance of their premature death is arguably one of the most unnatural aspects of *Never Let Me Go* but only serves to further emphasise the human selfishness that created them initially.

Bibliography

Books and articles


Robert Frost Teaching Notes for A Level, (ZigZag Education, 2012)


Websites
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/robert-frost
http://www.biography.com/people/robert-frost-20796091

2,144 words
148 quotations
1,996 net words

The assignment is excellently crafted to address the task criteria, whilst showing a highly detailed understanding of the texts. Very new reactivated, all assessment objectives are convincingly addressed. The comparison is consistently detailed throughout. Context of production and reception are explored and analysis is largely focused and precise.

24/25

Moderated to 25
19.4.2017

25/25 Amended | approved
Examiner commentary

AO1: The opening paragraph links the texts and addresses the task clearly, setting down a firm foundation. The discussion is fluent and well-referenced, showing a thoughtful and detailed understanding of both texts. They are discussed with confidence and ease. There is, however, no full reading of any of the poems chosen.

AO2: There are references to language, imagery and speakers’ perspectives in Frost, while tone and imagery is discussed in the novel. The analysis is focused and effective, though the differences in genre are not noted, with little discussion of narrative and no exploration of verse.

AO3: Relevant references are made to the significance of elements of Frost’s biography and his interests in evolution and industrialisation. These are connected with the reader’s contemporary awareness of environmental issues, while cloning and scientific advances are discussed usefully alongside the novel.

AO4: The comparative drive of the essay is consistent, each paragraph discussing both texts together. Comparisons are detailed and purposeful.

AO5: Paton’s comment on Frost is used as a foundation for a discussion of poems and Crimp’s views on the novel are applied to the text thoughtfully. There is engagement with Whitehead on the novel and the film adaptation is also used as a reading. Discussion of Bayan and Bloom on Frost is less developed, but overall there is detail in the exploration of different readings.
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