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Examiners' Report
January 2012

GCE English Literature 6ET03 01

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Introduction

Candidates for this paper continue to show evidence of coping well with a two and three quarter hour long paper, answering both the unseen and the text-based question. All candidates followed the requirement to have studied a post-1990 text.

From a fairly small entry, examiners saw a wide ranging set of answers, some of which showed impressive knowledge and ability to target the appropriate Assessment Objectives. Where less impressive knowledge was demonstrated in candidates' answers, examiners were concerned that candidates were often demonstrating a fairly limited knowledge of the texts that they had studied. For example, reference to a narrow range of poems, sometimes just one or two, or evidence of knowledge of small sections of the novels with minimal close textual support could be demonstrated. This may be a consequence of entering candidates for the examination after only little more than a term's preparation.

We expect candidates to write in a literary way in order to target AO1 and although many candidates are confident in their use of literary terminology, many are either inaccurate or not using terminology at all, perhaps remaining in a narrative or descriptive mode of writing.

The ability to deal critically with features of structure, form and language is essential when discussing both prose and poetry in order to target the AO2 criteria. Examiners felt that candidates were sometimes less confident in applying this skill to prose than to poetry.

It is essential to make comparisons between texts to hit AO3 criteria and examiners saw a very wide range of achievement in which less accomplished answers either made few comparisons or merely offered separate sections on each text with minimal links being made. Literary links between texts demonstrate a detailed knowledge in which apposite quotations support points made with great precision and insight.

Contexts are being dealt with increasing confidence in good answers, and being correctly ignored in Section A answers, although some answers refer to contexts in isolation without linking the often very valuable points to precise readings of the texts.

Question 1

As usual this was the more popular option from the unseens. Sound knowledge of form and structure informed many of the higher scoring answers. The regularity of the stanza structure and rhyme scheme was often identified, although interpretation of the effects of these on the reader varied considerably. Perceptive readers noted the iambic metre and the octosyllabic line structure although the long sixth line of each stanza and its possible effects was more often ignored. The variations in the metre tended to be ignored. The imagery and diction received a good deal of comment and the better answers realised that the Janus metaphor was a neat way of presenting the balance between old year and new and that the poet looks back on the past year as one when war had been threatened and avoided. Contextual knowledge of what might have been going on in 1787 is not necessary as the poet tells us her feeling about war in the words and images she uses. Less accomplished writers simply repeated the gloss on the identity of Janus from the footnote. The language, although regarded as simple or straightforward by many candidates, was often deceptively complex, more from the unconventional word order than from the words themselves although it seems likely that some were not aware of the identity of the 'muse' or what a 'lay' consists of in this context. The perhaps unintentional ambiguities and instabilities in the poem under its apparently smooth surface such as the 'tenement of clay' were commented on by some observant candidates. Several candidates seemed to think the authorial voice was a male one and, more perceptively, that there is an authorial voice which may or may not be that of the poet herself.

The musical qualities of the poem in its frequent use of assonance and alliteration as well as the regular rhyme scheme were easy to identify; their enhancement of its generally optimistic and even celebratory tone received appreciative comments from many candidates who provided evidence of positive appreciation of the poem's qualities.

It is worth reminding candidates that AO2 is assessing understanding of meaning and some candidates seemed to want to insist that the poem is about the new year, ignoring both the title and the rejection of this stance in opening stanza.

It is worth reminding candidates that only AOs 1 and 2 are being assessed here, so discussion of contextual matters gains no credit.

Here is an answer to the question which scores in the middle of band 2 for AO1 and at the top of band 3 for AO2.

PLAN

(1) The rhyming couplets as this to the rhythm helps create a song like rhythm songs were greatly appreciated in (78) where no other forms of entertainment lacked. I sing"

(2) Like a cycle + the form of it looks like a letter makes readers feel involved + Personal

meaning - cycle of life
- As a woman? Changing times?
- Year is a metaphor for a person
- Start afresh.
- May look like a nice life but it truly ends in death.

The title 'To the old year. 1787.' instantly allows the reader to suggest that the poem is in the form of a letter implied by 'to' and the simple stanza layout, which may create a sense of importance and meaning to the reader, as letter are most often personalised to someone. Therefore, as readers, we may feel privileged being able to read such a personal letter, also emphasised by personal pronouns such as 'me', 'I' and also the use of the rhetorical question 'who would not sing for gifts like these?' is used as if the narrator wishes to hear our opinion and answer.

The idea of the poem holding a sense of significance and meaning may be due to the personification of the 'year' and portraying a year to hold emotion which is important, as us as readers follow the same structure of life. "The months whose calm career". Months do not have careers, yet this may imply that each month does have a job and a role in every persons life to help or intervene our decisions. "The word calm" suggests that life should not be filled with stress or anxiety. which is also highlighted through the large array of positive lexis in the first half of the poem, "glad", "smile", "peace", "gifts" and "new".

~~This may also help emphasise the meaning that life is a continued cycle where there~~

However, the semantic field of happiness, only evident in the first half of the poem may also imply that life on the outside an in "our native island" may seem happy yet once you look closer life is unfair and untrustworthy. This is exaggerated through the structure of the poem where a large use of negative lexis is used. "die", "blunted", "troubled dream" and "phantoms". "He steals away the rose" is rather ambiguous and allows us readers to interpret "he" as the devil or God who takes away the living. Furthermore, the rhyming couplets create a song like rhythm, which may be used as a way to hide the realities within the poem and that although it is a 'new year', ~~there~~ the old problems will never truly disappear.

The number of syllables on each line is consistant helping also to create the song like melody, yet 'Anne Hunter' changes the last sentence on each stanza to an extended number of syllables to stand out and the last words on each stanza; "year", "gate", "chain", "die", "day"

and "year" emphasises the idea that life is a continual sylcle, also evident by her constant repetition of "circling", "circle round" and "eternal chain" and that though people die life continues like a circle with no end. as it starts with year and ends with year.

Moreover, as this was written during a time where women had been repressed and were living in a male dominated society, 'Anne Hunter' may be implying that it is time for change and that life is merely 'wealth, peace in honors smile' which may be a sarcastic tone. as that is not what will keep people happy. Furthermore, the negative end to the poem concludes that though "Joyful I sing", "praise to the power Supreme who guides the circling year". This mocking tone may mean (in my own opinion) we women do sing and seem happy but "with steady hand" will be become victorious. and dominate "power supreme" who create the tedious never ending, unfair life.

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Examiner Comments

The candidate gives evidence early in the response of a reasonably literary approach although there do seem to be some misreadings.

The poem is not really a letter (paragraph 1).

The reference to the number of syllables in each line referred at the bottom page 2 is not linked to meaning.

The final paragraph makes inappropriate (because they are not assessed) references to contexts.

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Examiner Tip

Make sure that you address only the Assessment Objectives relevant to your answer.

Always link comments to specific features of the poem.

This is from a good answer that scored in the top band for each assessment objective without quite achieving top marks.

Text A, 'To The Old Year, 1787' is a poem by Anne Hunter that focuses on the speaker's thoughts and feelings at the end of 1787 and the beginning of the new year, 1788. The poem seems like a celebration of everything that has happened the past year, while the speaker is clearly anticipating what the new year will bring. The regularity and orderliness of the poem's rhyme, rhythm and structure almost turn 'To The Old Year, 1787' into a songlike appreciation of all the 'good' things in her life.

The poem begins with an imperative statement: "Let the courtly bards... invoke the muse on New Year's Day". This use of the imperative highlights the celebratory nature of the poem – it feels as though, in her joy, she is eager for the new year to be full of wonderful literature and is impatient for this to happen so she tries to organise it herself. The reference to "the muse" is the first of several inclusions of Greek history and mythology in the poem, emphasising the of great art that has already been produced in the past year and other years gone by.

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Examiner Comments

The candidate writes in a clear and analytical manner with effective use of literary terminology.

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Examiner Tip

Get the examiner on your side from the outset with a clear indication of the approach you are going to take to the poem

This demonstrates some of the writer's strengths and weaknesses.

Despite the fact that a seemingly wonderful year has gone by, ~~the~~ and is over, the speaker does not seem to be upset by this – although there are tones of sadness in the poem, and the end of the year seems almost bitter sweet. It presents a conflict to the speaker: she "sing[s] in strains sincere" for "the departed year (~~although~~ and here, the alliteration temporarily softens the rhythm of the poem into something more akin to a lament) but also "behold[s] [her] native isle / In wealth, in peace, in honour's smile" in patriotic glory. This juxtaposition of these two feelings and ideas prevent the poem from becoming an almost too simple, flat appreciation and celebration of the New Year – and is emphasised by the reference to Janus. It is almost as if the speaker becomes Janus herself, unsure of which way she wants to turn: back to the year gone by in ~~her~~ her sense of nostalgia, or foward, to the new year in her excitement of what the future ~~with~~ will bring.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The writer refers to sadness without quite illustrating it, then goes on to successfully illustrate and comment on the alliteration later in the paragraph and deal with the perceived contrasts in the mood of the poem well. The treatment of the 'Janus' image is not as successful because it is not so fully explained.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Make sure points about technique or imagery are dealt with in detail and clearly illustrated.

This clip illustrates the essay's ending.

The poem ends with the Speaker citing her gratitude for the "well known face[s]" she is familiar with. Again, she expresses her thankfulness for the richness of what the last year has brought her and leaves well alone any feelings of "selfish[ness]" or "gloom[iness]". She repeats the penultimate line from the first stanza: "I sing, in strains sincere", emphasising her appreciation of what the year has brought her. The repetition also alters the tone of the final stanza slightly. Instead of finishing on an upbeat, celebratory note, the final two lines are sincere, and even poignant as she "praise[s]" the "Power Supreme, who guides the circling year".

In conclusion, 'To The Old Year 1987' does celebrate the end of the old year and the beginning of a new one – but it also does more than that. It teaches us to appreciate the time we have and often lapses into a thankful, sincere tone, altering the style of the 'music' it sounds similar too. The whole poem sounds like a piece of music, with upbeat moments and sincere, even melancholy moments – perhaps just like the year she is celebrating.

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Examiner Comments

The candidate has moved through the poem in sequence and ends with comments on the final stanza and a general conclusion.

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Examiner Tip

The examiner will be impressed if you bring your essay to a strong conclusion.

Moving through the poem in sequence is an effective way of structuring your answer but you might find an alternative method to suit the poem and your own preferences about tackling it.

Question 2

Candidates responded to the presentation of the characters who participate in the extract as well as those referred to. The hierarchical power relationship between the nurses as presented through narrative and dialogue received a range of perceptive answers. Good answers were also able to identify the first person narrator as a character within the novel and speculated about his identity and how this might influence language choice within the narrative voice. The characteristics of the utterances in the dialogue: their length, the colloquial language, the question/answer structure and the use of italics, received much useful attention. Many candidates commented on the contrast between the apparent calmness of the Big Nurse and the violent and sadistic imagery associated with her actions, suggesting her possible insanity. There was some speculation about the significance of the 'glass Station' and the 'foreign address' in the first line of the extract.

This is an example of a very high scoring answer.

This exchange between two nurses at a mental institute is a clear warning of an enemy to come. The author seeks to identify 'The Big Nurse' as a nemesis, one who will undeniably challenge our central character later in the book.

The reader achieves this ominous tone by integrating acts of violence with a cold and calculating idiolect. The supremacy of cruelty is inescapable and so we come to fear and loath 'Miss Ratched.'

One device Kesey uses is the contrast of the 'little nurse' with Ratched. By naming them 'Big' and 'little', he has established a hierachy where the capitalised 'Big Nurse' is superior and physically threatening to the 'little nurse.' This second nurse's innocence is emphasised by her repetition of 'Gee', a childlike phrase, and her apparent stupidity, as she repeats her question, proving she has failed to understand Ratched's first explanation.

The little nurse assumes benevolence where the Big Nurse assumes the opposite. 'What could his ends be?' suggests such a benign nature that the joys of simple disruption don't even occur to her. Ratched, in contrast is willing to assume any evil of the discussed patient, 'the feeling of power and respect, monetary gain...

perhaps all of these things.' heaps accusations of immoralities on the head of the 'Ward Manipulator.'

The tone Ratched adopts is a powerful tool in building distinct of her. Not only is her use of 'Miss Flinn' condescending and aggressive in its emphasis but her distinctly ~~pro~~ professional idiolect ~~the~~ suggests a strong sense of superiority. She speaks her opinion as though it is fact, 'that is exactly what the new patient is planning.' and seems to be referencing an unknown union of mental health nurses when she claims, 'He is what we call "a manipulator".' This technical term demonises the new patient whilst simultaneously diagnosing his tendencies as a condition. Her disdain is evident when she continues, 'who will use everyone and everything to his own ends.' Her ~~clear~~ disapproval is obvious through her repetitive choice of leans, implying he has no boundaries, will stop at nothing.

The calm and casual tone of her words is contrasted directly with the violence of her actions. Although her words are reminiscent of a psychiatry text book, 'A manipulator can influence the other patients...' when incensed, her actions betray her fury. Kesey shocks the ~~read~~ reader with the sharply monosyllabic description of her 'jabbing the need back into the vial... jerks it out.' The task of filling needles is, in itself, innocent (if annoyed) but the use of 'jabbed' and 'jerk' demonise it, giving Ratched a distinctly

threatening air.

This sense of impending doom penades the text. From the first paragraph we are told the little nurse 'keeps looking worried over her shoulder', implying a lack of safety on the ward but the most powerful message of warning is Kesey's ending the paragraph with 'just yet.' This can only be interpretted as a cautionary premonition.

One can't fail to imagine that Ratched will soon be mimicking the practiced 'stab' of the needle on a patient. In both cases where Kesey describes these abrupt needle stabs, he mentions its destination ('the rubber-capped vial') only after the verb has been allowed full impact on the reader. To be certain it is not a body we must read on.

The tale of 'Mis-tur Tay-bur' is perhaps most alarming. We, as readers, are far more able to identify the message Ratched is trying to give the benevolently dense nurse. Kesey visually and grammatically isolates 'For a while.' accentuating the impact of the statement. The reader is certain Mr Taber was stopped in an unpleasant way as Ratched refuses to elaborate further. The demonisation of Ratched reaches almost melodramatic lengths as Kesey describes the clichéd villain's 'far-off' gaze. The fact that Ratched is 'pleased with the memory' and savours each syllable of 'Mis-tur-Tay-bur' clearly

identifies her as sadistic.

Another aspect of the text is to highlight the patients' insanity. The utterly incomprehensible nature of his motives is drawn to our attention by the little nurse's statement, 'what on earth would make a man want to do something like disrupt the ward for... What possible motive...?' The emphatic 'make' and bewilderment of 'what on earth' lead the reader to ask themselves the same question. Kesey terminates the exchange with the damning scorn of 'You seem to forget, Miss Flinn, that this is an institution for the insane.' Even the highly knowledgeable Ratched has no ~~an~~ satisfactory answer but can only claim insanity.' She is, to the end, however, patronising in her address of 'Miss' Flinn. Kesey highlights the youth of Flinn with 'miss' and her naivity with it.

The reader is given a clear impression of two characters and a hazy impression of a third. The little nurse is sweet and sympathic with her childlike idiolect and 'humble opinion'. Ratched is, although 'calm, smiling' undoubtedly cruel and threatening. Her contrasting appearance and reality only make the reader increasingly wary of her.

Finally we are given a minor impression of the patient. The narrative stance is first person but strangely detached. The narrator says, 'I watch her' in a tone almost as threatening as she who he watches. The seemingly

malicious motivations he has are revealed and examined and yet he has very little emotional reaction. The reader can't help but dislike Ratched and yet we are ambiguous in our feelings about the narrator. A most intriguing conflict of emotions follows as we are led to sympathise with an ostensibly insane 'Ward Manipulator' in order to oppose the devilish 'Bog Nurse'.

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Examiner Comments

This writer has dealt with the passage in detail without taking a chronological approach.

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Examiner Tip

If you choose the prose option you might consider looking at different features of the writing such as characterisation, use of dialogue, tone and narrative voice.

Question 3 (a)

This section remains a popular choice amongst candidates and on this occasion choice between the (a) and (b) options was fairly equally divided. We received answers on all of the novels listed, although 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles and 'The Great Gatsby' were more popular than 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin'. Of the poetry texts, 'Rapture' remains by far the most popular; also there were quite a lot of responses on a fairly narrow choice of poets from the Metaphysical Anthology and just a few answers that referred to several poems from 'Emergency Kit'.

Generally responses demonstrated good textual knowledge. We would like to remind candidates to make sure that they are addressing AO2 adequately when dealing with the prose texts, as well the poems.

Comparisons need to do more than simply include fairly bland words 'likewise' or 'similarly' when they are attempting to make comparisons. Some candidates do make good use of other readers' interpretations to support points, others seem to be using the same stock phrases in order to cover this facet of AO3 without contributing much to the argument. The best answers hit this AO by making very consistent, and specifically literary links between texts so that the kind of imagery used in more than one text can be identified and analysed. Examples of this include the kind of emotions felt by lovers or other significant relationships in the poems and novels by all the writers under discussion. Examples include Angel and Alec's relationships with Tess, Pelagia's relationships with her father as well as Mandras and Corelli, the objects of desire in the poems of Donne, Marvell and Duffy.

Contextual points are dealt with in a variety of ways. Detailed knowledge of biographical details to inform discussions of Donne's and Duffy's poems in particular varied enormously in effectiveness. In the best responses, references to Donne's wife and his God were linked to individual poems and specific details within them. In the least successful responses, discussions of Duffy's sexuality and real people from her past tended to be included with little specific reference to how they informed the poems themselves. On the whole, candidates seem to be more comfortable with the contexts that inform appreciation of the novels, especially Tess and Gatsby although identifying the American Dream, the Jazz Age and prohibition are insufficient unless linked to specific features of the novel itself. Fitzgerald's relationship with Zelda was often used rather well to make clear links to relationships that are central to the novel. Discussion of Corelli all too often made the assumption that the novel is purely about the war years. Discussing the roles of women in the various texts was another effective way of finding links between the novels and between the novels and the poems.

It is worth reminding candidates of the precise wording of the question. Although the nature of relationships was discussed by almost all candidates, the key word 'change' was often ignored or left too much in the background.

This is a very high achieving essay scoring near the top of all four AOs.

Arguably ~~not one~~ every relationship throughout history and literature has undergone change in some form; Duffy, Hardy and Fitzgerald employ significant changes in the relationships they present to fully engage the reader's empathy and pathos for their protagonists. The main relationships presented are in no way ~~perfect~~ the perfect, fairytale relationships often conveyed in literature; each goes through a tumultuous journey of highs and lows, happiness shortly followed by pain and loss. This is perhaps what makes them so engaging for the reader; the bittersweet temporary happiness inevitably preceded by their demise, as opposed to a somewhat montonous relationship without change of any form.

Duffy portrays the change her speaker feels at the very start of the relationship; the process of falling in love:

'When did your name
change from a proper noun
to a charm?'

Duffy conveys the power and strength of love even from the birth of a new relationship; already, the object of the speaker's desire has power over her. The word 'charm' has connotations with

magic and spells, giving the relationship a mystical and mysterious quality. Moreover, the direct rhetorical question shows that the speaker has been suddenly and overwhelmingly hit by love, and that she was not expecting it. This links to Hardy's Talbothays dairy in 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles', where there seems to be an almost magical quality surrounding Tess and Angel's relationship. The beautiful setting aptly mirrors their intense feelings for one another:

'The floating pollen seemed to be his notes made visible'

The image created by Hardy of Angel's musical notes being the pollen floating in the air is extremely effective; it is almost as if, for the time being, time has been suspended, and the entire world has stopped moving during their temporary happiness. However, inevitably, time and its consequences does catch up with the couple, and the relationship changes drastically. This 'love at first sight' and overwhelming feelings also appears in 'the Great Gatsby':

'there was a change in Gatsby that was simply consounding. He literally glowed'

This change of emotion takes place in a very physical way in Fitzgerald's protagonists; Nick

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can see how great Gatsby's love for Daisy has become. This is an interesting point historically; although society was drastically different in Victorian England, 1920s America and modern day, each protagonist was identically changed by their individual powerful love. A critic Kate Kellaway stated on 'Rapture' that it 'follows a love affair from first spark to hell flame to final, messy conflagration.' This is applicable to all three pieces of literature, as even from the 'first spark' of the relationship, the reader is already aware of the inevitable tragedy to come.

One of the most significant changes in the relationships presented, and one that is particularly engaging for readers, is that of the change from innocence into desire, passion and danger:

'even my childhood shrank
to a glow-worm of light where those flowers darkened
and closed.'

In Duffy's 'forest', the speaker's sexual encounter marks an important change, as it strengthens her devotion towards her lover. However, there is a dark sense of wild freedom and indulgence. Flowers, which are normally delicate and fragile images of purity, are darkening and closing here, showing she has undergone an irreversible

change. Similar to this is Tess' experience in The Chase, which also results in irreversible consequences. The Chase differs from Duffy's magical forest showing that this change is not a positive one; darkness and silence rule, and the 'primeval' trees represent Alec's primeval lack of morality and savage inability to curb his sexual desires. Tess, from this point onwards, transforms in the judgemental eyes of society. Hardy himself stated that Tess was 'at the complete mercy of circumstance, a mere corpse floating with the current'; a young girl who once had dreams above and beyond her social status, now depicted as dead, condemned in the eyes of Victorian society. Through the tragedy in The Chase, Tess falls into disrepute and ignominy, while the insouciant Alec is free from consequence in patriarchal society.

Another significant change in the relationships is that of the absence of one of the lovers, resulting in longing and suffering. In 'Rain', Duffy's speaker feels physical and emotional strain when seperated from her love:

'Hotter than hell. I burned for you day and night'

The short, sharp sentence and alliteration of 'h' reflect the pain and heartache of the speaker; a breathy quality is created, like a sigh. Also,

the word 'burn' has connotations with an intense, physical pain or wound, foreshadowing the 'final, messy conflagration' of the relationship. The pain of absence is also conveyed in 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles', when Angel distances himself from Tess in his move to Brazil, driving Tess to eventually do what she swore she never would; return to Alec. In 'The Great Gatsby', longing is intensified through the knowledge that the object of their desire is unavailable, or slipping away from them. Myrtle's insane jealousy over Tom's wife is what essentially kills her, just as George Wilson's sadness and grief at the loss of his wife is what kills him. Moreover, many characters ~~[illegible]~~ are unwilling to accept that change ~~is~~ is, in fact, unavoidable; Gatsby's longing for Daisy ~~[illegible]~~ has spun to out of control that he refuses to see that she is not who she used to be; he is unable to admit that he 'can't repeat the past'. This constant dissatisfaction that all of Fitzgerald's characters feel highlights the shallow social values of 1920s America.

However, despite this period of desolate longing and grief, Duffy, Fitzgerald and Hardy present a short period of temporary happiness:

'Then love comes, like a sudden flight of birds

from earth to heaven ~~after~~ after rain.'

Duffy's relationship once again changes as contentment and love is restored; 'Rapture' is a traditional Shakespearean sonnet, highlighting the restored strength of the couple's love which is likened to that of Romeo and Juliet. Also, the poem is written in rhyming couplets, representing the renewed bond between them. This links to Tess and Angel's temporary peace in the deserted mansion, where they are free from society's scorn. However, in all three pieces of literature, this 'honeymoon period' ~~to~~ eventually leads to the relationships' downfall, due to over-reaching expectations and idealisation. Angel's idealisation of Tess as a 'perfect and chaste girl links to the 1920s perception of the American Dream; something out of reach, and, essentially, fictional and impossible. One critic, Lionel Trilling, suggested that 'Gatsby was America'; his dreams were too optimistic to ever be realised.

The final and most tragic change in the relationships is their end. In 'Grief', an indefinable sonnet greatly contrasting to 'Rapture', Duffy presents the hollow emptiness felt after their break-up. Hardy ~~as~~ and Fitzgerald's protagonists suffer a worse fate than this; their relationships

are ended by death itself. Even more tragically, perhaps, is the case with which the lovers move on after this death; Angel with Liza-Lu, and Daisy with Tom. Society itself is complete unaffected by the tragedy, and continues, oblivious. In Duffy's 'Unloving', she speaks of 'a dead heron mourned by a congregation of gulls'; reflective of Gatsby's unattended funeral and Tess' execution; it seems that no matter how strong a relationship appears to be, not even love can surpass death, as one critic stated that 'love is an extremity, rivalled only by death'.

Conclusively, one would strongly agree that relationships in literature are most engaging and invoke most empathy when faced ~~the~~ with constant change. Each relationship endures a winding and challenging journey; yet, inevitably in each, society, circumstance, and death prevail. The authors and poet engage readers through temporary times of happiness and contentment, followed by pain, suffering, and the inevitable conclusion to each relationship. This is most engaging as it is still highly applicable to modern readers in a modern context; no matter what time period, love and relationships undergo the same changes, twists and turns.

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Examiner Comments

This essay, long though it is, sustains focus on the topic and juxtaposes comments on all three texts under discussion consistently.

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Examiner Tip

Although you do not have write as much as this candidate in order to score highly, a sustained and fully detailed approach which focuses consistently on the question will score highly.

This is another high scoring essay although it scored rather low in AO2.

"Relationships in literature are at their most engaging for the reader when they deal with the nature of change".

"The Great Gatsby" by F Scott Fitzgerald and Carol Ann Duffy's anthology "Rapture", as well as the work of the metaphysical poet John Donne, are all examples of literature ~~which~~ that explores an intense relationship. The relationships portrayed are both those which change and develop, and those which do not, and it is interesting to consider which of these types of relationship engages most effectively with a reader.

"The Great Gatsby" was written in 1925, at a time of great change and social mobility in the US as a result of the end of World War One. The moral of the book, however, focuses on the fallibility of the American Dream, a concept spring from the 1776 American Declaration of Independence, which outlined every man's right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness". The characters within the novel are therefore often seen to resist change in favour of faithfully chasing an illusive dream. Duffy, on the other hand, explores the development of her relationship through her chronological anthology, questioning the reason for the change in it through poetry which she has described as "the place where language is the most truthful". Similarly, Donne is also seen to explore changes within himself and a lover through poetry, but as a 16th century poet, his work is often highly intellectual, written to impress the narrow ~~literear~~ literary audience of the time, and has therefore been accused of being "merely

brain-spun" in the past.

However, both Donne and Duffy can be said to change over the course of their work, both in terms of themselves and their emotions. Throughout her anthology, Duffy explores how her feelings towards her lover are transforming her out look on life. "Name", a poem very close to the beginning of the anthology, and therefore the relationship, explores the way her lover's name has "change[d] from a proper noun to a charm". Duffy has always been interested in fairytales, having adapted The Grimm Brother's work for the stage and called it her 'desert island book', and the fairy-tale-like feeling of being bewitched (eg. "thought of you all day, I think of you", 'Rapture') throughout her anthology not only engages the reader but also helps the reader to understand Duffy's near-bewildement at suddenly being so overcome by love. ~~Physical~~ Metaphorical changes portrayed throughout the anthology such as "we dressed again in the gowns of the moon" ('Forest'), "I drop my past on the grass" ('River'), and "I drop the dying year behind me" ('New Year'), all emphasise the feeling that Duffy's emotions are transforming her.

Similarly, there is a change ~~in~~ of tone in John Donne's poetry, implying perhaps a development of character as the result of a relationship. In work such as 'To His Mistress Going To Bed', ~~we see~~ the reader sees Donne as a persistent seducer, the iambic pentameter and rhyming couplet-structure ~~of the poem~~ giving the feel of pounding blood and racing pulse

to the poem that Fiona Shaw called "a verbal striptease". Here, an ironic take on a blazon (Donne lists clothes for his lover to remove rather than elements of her beauty, as was traditional within the literary convention of courtly love, - "Unlace yourself", "off with that happy bark", "off with your hose" ....) perhaps ~~least~~ Lea ~~Theodore Redpath~~ James Winney to call him "a rouē who scorns the Petrarchan poets attempts to deify women". When young, Donne was called 'a great visitor of the ladies', and this poem perhaps reflects that time of his life. However, later work such as "The Good-Morrow" and "Nocturnal on St Lucy's" (written after the death of his wife Ann Moore) imply a very different person to the young seducer of women.

Whereas Duffy feels bewitched by love, and calls ~~in~~ her lover in the first poem of her anthology, 'You', "a touchable dream", Donne ~~dec~~ likens the act of falling in love to waking up, asking if before then "snorkd we in the seven sleepers' den?". He calls all previous loves merely "fancies", saying that they were "but a dream of thee". Whereas Duffy's change is almost from reality to dream and back, and Gatsby is dream-like throughout his relationship, love transforms Donne by allowing to escape from "childish" dreams - he feels as if his soul is only now "waking".

The two final poems of Duffy's anthology ("Mrs" and "Over") reflect on the development and end of her relationship, in a similar way to Donne's poem "Nocturnal on St Lucy's Day". In these two poems Duffy realises her relationship is "only art now",

and that she has "only the blush of memory". The Philosophy of language was part of Duffy's undergraduate degree and her obsession with words has caused her to ~~over analyse her~~ preserve her relationship in ~~words~~ poetry, but also to ultimately destroy it - as a review in the Guardian said "the paradox for any love-poet is that the time spent in making the ~~loved one~~ poem is time not spent on the loved one". However, Duffy can see hope in her future ("It is a key, unlocking all the dark" ('Over')) ~~where~~, meaning that she can continue to change and develop where Donne cannot. Whereas the emotional journey from "To his Mistress Going To Bed" to "The Good-Morrow", seems to be a positive change in Donne's character (particularly for a modern audience more comfortable when the female portrayed is more equal to the man - "our two loves be one"), the change wrought by the loss of love which is portrayed in "Nocturnal on St Lucy's Day" is a tragic one.

Without his wife, Donne describes himself, through means of an ~~it~~ intellectual conceit, as "the grave of all that's nothing". Whereas Duffy ~~is willing~~ appears to be willing to change again to survive the loss of her relationship, Donne refuses to let "[his] Sun renew". He declares others should ~~to~~ go and "fetch new lust", but he will stay with his wife, and "prepare towards her". Although this complete inability to move on from a relationship is still extremely ~~of~~ effective and distressing for a contemporary audience, at the time

it would have been even more shocking, as 16th Century England was nearly exclusively Christian and Donne's refusal to move on from his dead wife would be seen as almost blasphemous. It could be said perhaps therefore that although both Duffy and Donne's emotional changes caused by love, engage the reader, it is Donne's final refusal of change - "let me call this hour her vigil" - ~~it~~ that creates the most effective ~~literea~~ literature of all, coming, as ~~Jam~~ Theodore Redpath said, "from a passionate heart".

Furthermore, there is also a feeling of unwillingness to change within "The Great Gatsby", which, like "Nocturnal on St Lucy's Day", also engages the reader. In the novel, Gatsby is so committed to his memory of his relationship with Daisy that he turns his pursuit of it into "a holy grail". When Gatsby ~~feeft~~ leaves Louisville he feels as if he is "leaving [Daisy] behind", and searches to find her again obsessively, desperate to "repeat the past". When he eventually remeets ~~&~~ Daisy she cannot help but "[tumble] short of his dreams" as he has not allowed for the possibility of change, but instead has been so focused on "the colossal vitality of his illusion" that he is almost confused ("I saw that expression of bewilderment") that everything is not "just as it were five years ago". As William Troy wrote, twenty years after the novel was published, "it is a story of failure - the ~~ado~~ prolongation of the adolescent incapability to distinguish between dream and reality". Whereas Duffy recognises and explores the changes within her

relationship, Gatsby does not realise his memory of Daisy will not reflect the woman she has become, and so like Donne is left feeling isolated from the world - "he had lost the old warm world". ~~Which~~ The "high price" that Gatsby paid (i.e. death) for not allowing himself to develop emotionally, but instead "living too long with a single dream" ~~who~~ would have particularly engaged an American audience in the 20s familiar ~~to~~ with the concept of the 'American Dream', whereas to a modern audience Gatsby's incorrigability may seem foolish, and the consequences thereof ~~unavoidable~~ inevitable.

I think therefore that it is true that ~~literary~~ literature on the subject of relationships is most engaging when it discusses the subject of change, as change is an unavoidable aspect of any relationship, and whether or not a writer acknowledges this is very interesting to explore. ~~Whereas~~ Gatsby never allows for the possibility of change, and the change in Donne's relationship happens unexpectedly, meaning that the consequences of the end of both relationships are tragic - death and grief. Duffy however, analyses the development of her relationship throughout her anthology, ~~po~~ through the means of language, possibly thereby destroying it but also allowing herself the hope of moving on at its end. However, whatever the consequences, I think that the exploration and portrayal of change or lack thereof within a relationship is always effective, and therefore will always engage a reader, ~~regardless of~~ both ~~modern~~ now and at the time the texts were written.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There are some particularly effective uses of contexts as well as comparisons between the texts in this essay.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

If you can make effective contextual points and consistent links between texts you will score highly.

This essay gains a mark in the mid-range, scoring in band 2 for AOs 1 and 2 , high in band 3 for AO3 and low in band 4 for AO4

Filial relationships are also explored in both novels although, the nature of these parental relationships do not change, the reader is still enticed. The relationship between Tess and her parents does not change at any point in the novel. As a result, Tess ~~takes on the role of responsibility and~~ tries to provide for her family as her father is incapable of doing so. This leads to her downfall and eventual death but her parents do not change. ~~This would have been the stereotypical view~~ Jack Durbeyfield would have been the stereotypical view of what the working class were like in the Victorian Era. Alcohol was seen as a form of escape from the harsh reality of peasant life. Despite the brutal situations ~~her~~ Tess is forced into and the crisis emedded in Jack and Joan's relationship, the two characters never change and still remain entriguing.

Similar to this, the relationship between Dr. Iannis and Pelagia also does not change. In a question and answer session with the 'Mail on Sunday' de Bernières stated: "the relationship between Dr. Iannis and Pelagia... is a key relationship... both are in charge of different aspects of their mutual life". I agree with this as Iannis allows Pelagia to voice her opinions and encourages her to be strong-willed. However, Pelagia still remains respectful even though Iannis has broken down ~~some~~ barriers between the two generations. This "key relationship" is an example of how the ~~readers~~ ~~one~~ author is able to keep the reader entertained whilst leaving the relationship unchanged throughout the novel.

The novels were written in different eras and for different audiences, giving de Bernières the benefit of hindsight as a modern writer. 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' presents all females to be submissive to men whereas 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin' explores some male/female relationships which are more equal. This shows how a woman's position in society has and is changing. Some feminists would argue that Thomas Hardy is a misogynist. I disagree with this as I believe Hardy conveys the social confines women suffer in a male dominated society. Tess strives for a better future no matter how bleak her surroundings are which highlights her ruthlessness and presents women in a positive light.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There are some quite effective links between the texts under discussion and relevant contextual points but they could be explored more fully.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Make sure that comparisons and contextual points are fully integrated into your discussion.

Question 3 (b)

As with question (a) the ability to deal with relationships was rarely in doubt, the ability to identify and discuss how conventions were broken was quite often ignored. There were interesting responses focussing on the poetry of Donne in terms of breaking of literary and contextual conventions. The ways in which de Bernières characterises Carlo with regard to the breaking of conventions was passionately handled by some candidates.

This is a very sound essay although it is low in band 5 for AO4 and at the top of band 4 for AO3

Duffy, Hardy and Fitzgerald all present texts that follow the course of complex relationships, which often challenge convention. In 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' and 'The Great Gatsby', the relationships break tradition in terms of social status, whereas 'Rapture' breaks the tradition of morality.

In all three texts, the writers evoke sympathy within the reader by presenting one character's absolute dependence on the other. In 'Rapture' the poem 'Wintering' expresses the sheer pain that the speaker feels without their lover.

The poem opens with the line, 'All day, slow funerals have ploughed the rain.' The comma creates a pause which emphasises that the day is 'slow', which is odd to the reader as usually she complains that there is not enough time. The image of 'funerals' shows that the relationship has died. Furthermore, the internal rhyme between 'rain/again' creates a song-like tone that severely contrasts with the speaker's grief as she states: 'Grey fades to black.' This monosyllabic statement is harsh and reveals the pessimistic viewpoint of the speaker; without her lover life gets worse and worse. She feels that everything is against her, 'Dawn mocks me with a gibberish of birds.' This suggests paranoia, and as she contemplates the 'broken chords' of the relationship, she fails to understand the 'gibberish'. It is interesting that Duffy describes the bird song in this way, as it would usually be viewed as beautiful, showing that the speaker fails to find any beauty in Winter.

The objects in the garden mirror the relationship; the ice 'grimaces, then breaks', personifying the speaker's heartache. One critic states, "Pain has more character than the person who has inflicted it." This is true, as the lover is kept silent throughout the text, never

given a voice. However, pain is clearly conveyed throughout the poem:

'The wind screams at the house, bitter, betrayed'

It is interesting that the wind is personified, as this could represent the speaker, screaming at the lover, an inanimate, expressionless object. The alliteration of the harsh 'b' sound is accusatory, suggesting that it is the lover who has done wrong, just as Angel 'grievously wronged' Tess.

Similarly, in 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles', Hardy uses Tess' dependence upon Angel as a tool to create sympathy. The reader is presented with a relationship that breaks tradition as Angel forsakes a Cambridge education and the benefits of wealth for a simple, pastoral life. Without this choice, he would never have met Tess, who incidentally is noble by blood but peasant by circumstance, due to the Victorian changes of social class. It is by this lack of convention that Tess falls completely in love with Angel, and he becomes, 'the very breath and life of her being.' Hardy's use of the metaphor 'breath and life' is improbably coincidental, as without Angel her 'life' will deteriorate and her 'breath' will be cut short. This dangerous dependence foreshadows Tess' ominous end. ~~When she is~~ She is not only emotionally dependent upon Angel, but also financially, and when he leaves her she

is driven to harsh labour at Flintcomb-Ash; 'the red tyrant that the women had come to serve...' Hardy's use of colours such as 'red' and 'black' suggest hell, or pain, revealing the strenuous nature of the work. Though the negative portrayal of this man-made machinery, Hardy criticises the Industrial Revolution and its effect on the landscape. Furthermore, the fact that the women 'serve' this 'Plutonic master' highlights the inequalities between genders, suggesting that the consequences of men's actions have a profound effect on women. Although Tess and Angel's relationship breaks tradition, in some aspects it is still conventional as the woman is dependent upon the man.

This dependence is also explored in 'The Great Gatsby', although in this text the man, Gatsby, is dependent upon the woman, Daisy. He has spent his entire life acquiring wealth in order to gain her affection, and is the embodiment of the American Dream. Fitzgerald uses delayed character revelation in order to shroud Gatsby's past in mystery, and when the reader finally meets this character, he is almost an anti-climax. At the beginning of the text Gatsby appears to the reader as he desires to appear to the world, when in reality he is no more than a naive, lovesick man. The American Dream of propelling oneself out of an impoverished lifestyle into wealth is one that challenges the convention of social class. Gatsby is able to make himself worthy of upperclass Daisy, just by his wealth, which reveals the

focussed

superficiality of the 1920s society. However, one critic states: "A popular characteristic of American literature is the separation of love and money. Possession of one does not lead to possession of the other." This is true, as Gatsby never actually possesses Daisy, which is why his dependence upon her is so dangerous:

'They had forgotten me, but Daisy glanced up and held out her hand; Gatsby didn't know me now at all.'

Gatsby is totally consumed by his love of Daisy; he is focused upon his 'green light' and cannot look away. ~~Have~~ In contrast, Daisy recognises Nick and reaches out, perhaps foreshadowing the way in which she will reach out to her marriage and betray Gatsby. Duffy's poem 'Grief' portrays Gatsby's emotions after Daisy's rejection:

'Grief, your gift, unwrapped,
my empty hands made heavy.'

Gatsby would have given Daisy everything, but all she gives him is grief. Duffy's utilisation of the phrase 'your gift' makes this poignant, and also sarcastic as the speaker despairs in their lost love, causing the reader to feel compassion for this relationship. A modern reader is able to empathise with the speaker, however, a reader of an earlier time period may have condemned the immoral relationship and felt no pity.

Another aspect that joins all three texts is the

idolisation of the lovers. In this sense, the writers do not challenge convention, as this is timeless, but it does evoke compassion for the characters. In Duffy's poem 'Treasure', the use of colours such as 'gold', 'ruby', 'turquoise', 'silver' and 'amber' all suggest that their lover is precious to them and highly sought after. The lover is presented as something idyllic, a 'chrism blessing'. However, Duffy subtly weaves in the line, '... gold weight of your head / on my numb arm.' This creates a sense of foreboding as the lover is putting 'weight' or strain on the relationship, but the speaker is willing to suffer being 'numb' to keep this love alive, and this self-sacrificing attitude reminds the reader of Tess, "I will obey you like your wretched slave, even if it is to lie down and die." The speaker of Duffy's poem recognises that all is not well in the relationship, but is willing to play the 'fool' and believe the 'lies'. The reader may question if this is fate, or karma, as in the poem 'Spring' the speaker alludes to 'their stolen hours, their necessary lies.' Because of the lack of the traditional morality, the relationship suffers from the same sins it is guilty of, as it seems to be some sort of affair.

Likewise, in 'Tess of the D' Urbervilles', Angel idolises Tess, referring to her as 'Artemis, or Demeter'. Tess does not understand these names as she cannot relate to

them. It is interesting that one is the goddess of earth and fertility, as Tess has given birth, laboured in the fields and taken part in rituals such as the May dance. It is ironic that the other goddess represents chastity and hunting, as Tess is no longer chaste and is not a hunter, but one who is hunted.

Tess is also guilty of idolising Angel, who in fact reflects the hypocrisy of 19th century society in his rejection of her; he is just like the brothers that he scorns. The characters' idolisation of each other is a timeless trait of love, yet the reader feels compassion as it can only result in disastrous consequences.

All three texts present relationships that attempt to break societal conventions; however, the basic characteristics of the relationships are typical.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Although there are good comparisons, the writer often has blocks of analysis on each text before moving on to another one; for example the whole of pages 2 and most of page 3 are about Duffy before moving on to Hardy near the bottom of page 3 .

The reference to a critic at the bottom of page 2 is illustrated but the critic remains unnamed.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Try to integrate comparisons, trying to avoid blocks of comment on just one text.

It is not essential to refer to named critics but if you do, say clearly to whom you are referring.

Question 4 (a)

We did not see many answers on this section but candidates made some interesting and valid links between, say, the presentation of women in the poetry texts with useful and relevant discussions of what might constitute the 'unconventional'; the presentation of the Wife of Bath and the Fat Black Woman provoked some useful links and there were some positive responses to Billy Collins and the ways in which he breaks convention in his choice of subject matter as well as his sense of humour.

More candidates offer this choice in the June series so it is worth including a good response to this question as an exemplar.

This a high scoring answer to the question. Although it did not receive top marks, it scores in the top band for each of the assessment objectives.

I agree with the comment that however challenging or inappropriate the behaviour depicted, the presentation ~~of~~ the unconventional is what is really compelling about human conduct in novels and poems. However, I believe that this is largely context-driven, as the ~~definitions of~~ idea of challenges, appropriate behaviour and conventions ~~a~~ vary largely between ~~a~~ different eras.

The notion of conventions or what is conventional is vastly ~~de~~ + dependent on the context in which it is being written about. All three texts, "Life of Pi" by Yann Martel, "Great Expectations" by Charles Dickens and "The Wife of Bath" by Geoffrey Chaucer defines conventional behaviour and situations differently through the settings of the texts. Indeed, ~~if one~~ in the case of "Life of Pi", ~~where~~ the protagonist, Piscine Molitor Patel (Pi) is depicted by the author to be living in ~~a~~ modern-day India with a comfortable home and no extraordinary problems to be dealt with (with the exception of being teased ~~as~~ with "Pissing Patel", which, ~~in his the~~ given the context is a norm of schoolchildren). ~~has to~~ Given this social context, it is when Pi is brutally taken

are drummed into the reader. Moreover, Hosseini uses short sentences to add incrementum to the passage, echoing the chaos of the fight. Similarly, Sassoon shows how writers ~~convey~~ display the horrors of war when he writes "He put a bullet through his brain". This moving description shows the atrocities that occur in war, using a combination of the plosive sound of "Put" and "Bullet" with the scientific ~~terms~~ lexis "Brain" to convey Sassoon's bitterness. ~~to the~~ Both Sassoon and Hosseini outline how horrific the battles fought during war can be, and how much damage can be inflicted on an opponent. However, it could be argued that ~~Sassoon~~ war literature ~~of Sassoon's era~~ would be more poignant to Sassoon's contemporary readers, compared to Hosseini's modern audience. When Sassoon was writing, his readers were accustomed to ~~the~~ Victorian and Romantic style literature, which was not as explicit in its nature as his poems. Consequently, the graphic tone of his work shocked ~~a~~ his audience, as it was a huge ~~contrast~~ change to the previous literary style. Contrastingly, an audience of 2012 are used to post modern literature, which is often graphic, so this shock factor that Sassoon's work possessed may be diminished for a modern reader. Indeed, whereas Yeats criticised the work of Sassoon ~~as~~ when he wrote "Passive suffering is not a theme for poetry", war literature is critically acclaimed in modern society, proving that the impact of war literature may have decreased since world war one.

On the other hand Dorothy Parker's "Penelope" shows the heroism and excitement of war, when she describes a soldier's life

Pip in the most unconventional way, whereby wanting to rise above one's social class was practically unheard of in a Victorian context to ensure that readers across time would identify themselves with the ~~behaviour~~ idea of human behaviour and conduct, rather than ~~the~~ be disillusioned and disengaged from the core of the novel by the differences in "conventions".

As far as the idea of ~~appropriateness~~ inappropriate ~~and challenging~~ behaviour is concerned, this is another concept that is very ~~much~~ closely tied to the differences in conventions. Behaviour that is considered to be inappropriate in Medieval or Victorian contexts may not be considered as such in ~~a~~ ~~mod~~ a modern society, and vice versa. It is due to this varied definition of appropriate behaviour that the characterisation ~~of~~ some of the central characters in all three texts become hugely ~~influenci~~ influential to the readers' receptiveness of the novel. Pi is characterised by Martel to be a very sweet-natured, happy-go-lucky, ~~veget~~ animal-loving teenager in the first part of the novel, which is very much akin to "conventional" behaviour in a modern context. However, by the second part of the novel, Pi is presented to the reader as an animal (Richard Parker), in the sense that he now kills ~~turtles~~ and devours raw sealife (and if the human version of Pi's story is to

be believed, resorts to ~~canib~~ cannibalism), all examples of behaviour that is ~~huge~~ wildly inappropriate and unacceptable in a modern context. However, due to the fact that Martel placed his protagonist in the most unconventional ~~s~~ of situations possible, the reader shifts their focus from the atrocity of Pi's behaviour and is instead compelled by the idea of human conduct in the face of such extraordinary situations. ~~Th~~ A similar conclusion can be drawn from Dicken's ~~characterisation~~ and Chaucer's depiction and characterisations of Pip and Alison. ~~Pip~~ Both Pip's and Alison's behaviour, like that of Pi's, is seen as hugely inappropriate given the context of the texts. Indeed, Pip is depicted as a character who (by victorian ideals) has the audacity to believe that "no man who was not a true gentleman at heart,... was... a true gentleman in manner" (pg 167) and put effort into achieving his ambition to be a "gentleman", while Alison defies all Medieval norms in which ~~whereby~~ a chauvanistic society demanded the submission of womenkind to men and instead insists on ~~desires~~ "auctoritee" and "soverainetee" ~~from~~ in her ~~marriages~~ marriages. However, like in the case of "Life of Pi", the so-called inappropriate behaviours of Pip and Alison are overlooked by the readers, because the presentation of the unconventional compells

the reader to question instead the idea of human conduct in all three ~~both~~ texts. In the case of Pip, readers question their own judgements on how far they will be willing to pursue ambition and ~~forego~~ make sacrifices as Pip had done along the way, whilst ~~in~~ as far as Pi's predicament is concerned, readers are compelled by the idea of to what extent Pi's ~~behaviour to survive~~ ~~willingness~~ ~~need to~~ desire to survive ~~is~~ justifies his animalistic behaviour, while Alison's inappropriate behaviour evokes thoughts on gender equality and understanding in the minds of the readers. Thus, it is clear that ~~the~~ no matter how so-called inappropriate the behaviour depicted by the writers, it is indeed the presentation of the unconventional that renders all three texts such huge successes.

~~Furthermore,~~ Besides the idea of inappropriate behaviour, the protagonists of all three texts faced a series of conflicts and challenges in behaviour, that ~~as the plots reached~~ based on the contexts of the three texts ~~also~~ were also instrumental in engaging readers. In particular, Pi's challenging behaviour and conflicts peaked in the ~~climax of the~~ second part of the novel, where Martel ~~clea~~ cleverly infused the unconventional with the high levels of challenging behaviour Pi was to overcome, thus ~~compelling the reader to~~ drawing the

reader into what is compelling about human conduct. Pi, a sixteen-year-old boy loses his entire family in a flash and spends the next 227 days (a little over seven months) on the Pacific is an unconventional situation which is rife with challenging behaviour as he braves the elements with limited resources and a Bengal tiger. Pi's conflicts as he deals with his unbelievable situation creates a suspension of disbelief for the reader, given the context of the text. As a result, the author successfully brings the reader on Pi's journey as he struggles to maintain his sanity by thinning the veil between reality and imagination. It is at the ~~end~~ resolution of the text, ~~whereby~~ ~~when~~ that the reader is urged to take the leap of faith, along with the Japanese officials who ~~that~~ interview Pi. In all three texts, the ~~a~~ writers incorporate the ~~most~~ unconventional into the inappropriate and challenging behaviours of the protagonists. This is why, despite the incredible challenges depicted by Pi, Pip and Alison, the reader is compelled by human conduct, given the contexts in which they ~~to~~ are presented. Thus, besides Pi, Pip and ~~a~~ Alison too face ~~a series of~~ challenging behaviour that would ~~ordinary~~ ordinarily leave the readers unconvinced, but given the context of the texts, the authors intentions are fulfilled. For

instance, Pip, like Pi, faces ~~challenge~~ conflict when he discovers that his secret benefactor is none other than Magwitch, while in the case of Alison, she too faces conflict ~~when~~ in her last marriage to ~~yon~~ young Jenkins, who also abuses her and expects her to be ~~the~~ the conventional submissive medieval wife. For Pip, Dickens displays challenging behaviour because the revelation of Magwitch's identity means that all of Pip's efforts to become a gentleman is rendered futile ~~because~~ ~~because~~ because Magwitch is a convict, whilst Chaucer depicts Alison's challenging behaviour in the form of Jenkins, who ~~abus~~ abuses the woman who desires "soverainetee", leaving her helpless. As a result, as was the case with "Life of Pi", readers (due to the differences in context) are ~~intrigued~~ intrigued not by how appropriate or challenging the three protagonists' behaviour, but rather the psyche and understanding of human conduct, ~~that~~ as the writers ~~put~~ intended.

Generally, ~~the~~ I believe that the contexts in which the three texts were written plays a monumental role in how well readers across time receive them. Thus, for "Life of Pi", "Great Expectations" and "The Wife of Bath", bearing in mind the large

variations in context, no matter how challenging or inappropriate the behaviour depicted, the presentation of the unconventional is what is really compelling about human conduct in novels and poems.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This answer makes good use of all texts under discussion with effective balance between them, together with excellent textual references.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Define your terms clearly at the beginning of your essay and argue consistently throughout.

Question 4 (b)

We received an insufficient number of essays on this question for us to draw any firm conclusions.

Question 5 (a)

We received a very small number of answers to this section.

Question 5 (b)

Very few answers were received to this question.

Question 6 (a)

War remains the other very popular choice of topic with many more opting for the (a) question. Although all the novels had been studied, there were more answers on 'Spies' and 'The Ghost Road' than on 'The Kite Runner' on this occasion. Candidates often make profitable connections between Barker's fictionalised Owen and Sassoon and the poems written by their real selves, often making effective and perceptive linguistic links. The range of poems and poets was rather narrow this time with Owen and Sassoon being complemented by Pinter, Levertov, Hughes and Fell.

There were many commendable attempts to cope with the ideas lying behind the question with there being no lack of horrors and suffering to offer as evidence. Owen and Sassoon were the main sources of evidence amongst the poets, Prior's diary, from the latter part of 'The Ghost Road' The second aspect of the topic tended to reject the idea of heroism making appropriate references to the presentation of Uncle Peter in Spies and Baba in 'The Kite Runner', Hallet and Prior in 'The Ghost Road'. A number of candidates explored the presentation of Prior as a character easy for a modern reader to identify with because of his background and experiences gave him peculiarly modern qualities.

Good linguistic and thematic links between texts were often very effectively used with especially appropriate links between the fiction of 'The Ghost Road' using the 'real' characters of Owen and Sassoon from the novel in tandem with the actual poems, especially, Dulce et Decorum Est, Suicide in the Trenches and The General.

There was often good contextual knowledge showing sound knowledge of the circumstances of the writing of the first and second world war poems, Frayn's use of his own wartime circumstances and ways in which Barker, writing many years after the events being depicted in her novel is able to employ language, incorporate scenes and analyse character with the benefit of hindsight and the very different circumstances of the time of writing.

This is high scoring essay although the marks for AOs 3 and 4 are low in band 5.

Essay

in "The Kite Runner"

Hosseini bears witness to the horrors of war when he describes Amir and Assef's fight as "That snapping sound... ~~Sohrab scream~~ Music. Sohrab screaming ... getting kicked. Sohrab screaming". Hosseini's anaphora of "Sohrab screaming" conveys the terror of the fight, as the repetition of Sohrab's screams are drummed into the reader. Moreover, Hosseini uses short sentences to add incementum to the passage, echoing the chaos of the fight. Similarly, Sassoon shows how writers ~~convey~~ display the horrors of war when he writes "He put a bullet through his brain". This moving description shows the atrocities that occur in war, using a combination of the plosive sound of "Put" and "Bullet" with the scientific ~~term~~ lexis "Brain" to convey Sassoon's bitterness. ~~to the~~ Both Sassoon and Hosseini outline how horrific the battles fought during war can be, and how much damage can be inflicted on an opponent. However, it could be argued that ~~Sassoon~~ war literature ~~of Sassoon's era~~ would be more poignant to Sassoon's contemporary readers, compared to Hosseini's modern audience. When Sassoon was writing, his readers were accustomed to ~~the~~ Victorian and Romantic style literature, which was not as explicit in its nature as his poems. Consequently, the graphic tone of his work shocked ~~a~~ his audience, as it was a huge ~~contrast~~ change to the previous literary style. Contrastingly, an audience of 2012 are used to post modern literature, which is often graphic, so this shock factor that Sassoon's work possessed may be diminished for a modern reader. Indeed, whereas Keats criticised the work of Sassoon ~~as~~ when he wrote "Passive suffering is not a theme for poetry", war literature is critically acclaimed in modern society, proving that the impact of war literature may have decreased since world war one.

On the other hand Dorothy Parker's "Penelope" shows the heroism and excitement of war, when she describes a soldier's life

as "In the footsteps of the breeze... he shall ride the silver seas". The ABAB rhyme structure and the poem's sibilence ("Silver seas") makes the poem sound more lyrical, and present war as glorious and majestical through the harmonious way Parker describes the soldier's life. Parker also shows how men can be heros during war in "The Ghost Road" when she writes "Bear like we must fight the course". This feral depiction of soldiers enhances the heroic image, as their reliance on instincts is powerful and brave like a bear. Hosseini mirrors this idea when he describes Amir as "Wrestling the bear". This too shows the stereotypical strength and adonis-like image of heroic soldiers, and, coupled with Parker's description of the splendour of conflict, Hosseini and Parker show how soldiers can be heros, regardless of the horrors and suffering outlined by Sasson. Out of "The Ghost Road" and "The Kite Runner" perhaps Hosseini's is the most pertinent for a modern reader, as he is writing about a conflict that remains unresolved. Alternatively, Parker is writing about a war that happened almost a century ago, and therefore does not possess the relevency that makes Hosseini's novel so compelling to a modern audience. This view was argued by the Observer, who praised "The Kite Runner" as "The first accurate Afghan novel written in English".

Moreover, Hosseini adds further evidence for Amir as a hero in war. He describes his rival, Assef, as "A sociopath", enforcing the idea of war as a struggle of good verses evil. This extremely negative picture of Assef demonstrates how war can be a necessary tool to remove evil, and how heroic attitudes can flourish. However, this particular conflict was criticised by Matthew Thomas Millar, who

categorised Hosseini's characterisation of Assef as "New Orientalist" - namely portraying the Afghan people as barbaric towards a Western audience. This would be pounced upon by ~~readers~~ modern readers, who, having witnessed events such as 9/11, would be eager to justify their war on the Taliban. ~~It could be as~~ The San Francisco Chronicle went so far as to argue "The Kite Runner" was only successful due to the Afghan war. Nevertheless, Amir's perseverence undeniably triumphs over evil, ~~[illegible]~~ showing further how writers also have to highlight some of the heroics and excitement of war.

However, writers can also show how the heroics of soldiers can adversely effect society and the planet, and remind the reader of the uncomfortable truth that ~~a~~ war will always damage someone or something. The sufferings of the landscape are potrayed by Baker when she describes a war-torn village, to show how destructive ~~the~~ ~~war~~ war can be. She writes "Black jagged edges... lace curtains hanging limp behind cracked or shattered glass, using the semantic field of destruction such as "Jagged", "Cracked" and "Shattered" to display the utter carnage of the front. ~~Her~~ Her personification of the ~~lace~~ curtains as "Hanging limp" ~~a~~ presents a juxtaposition between ~~the~~ fragility and ~~and~~ the cataclysmic battle, further ~~e~~enhancing the destruction. ~~So~~ Likewise, Sassoon presents the location of war as being horrendous when he writes "In winter trenches cowed and glum with crumps and lice and lack of rum". This triadic pattern shows an equally bleak portrayal of war's consequences, and shows how though writers do show some benefits of war, they are constantly reminding us of the horrors and sufferings.

The evolution of the media in relation to war's ~~[illegible]~~ portrayal

could differentiate between the horrors outlined by Sassoon and Parker. Sassoon's and the copious other war poets such as Rosenberg and Owen's, poems were direct accounts of the First world war. Their frank, and truthfull accounts directly contradicted the censored articles in the papers on the radio, which showed how the war was progressing well, and was jovial and heroic. Sassoon's opposition to the overpowering waves of jingoism made his work extremely powerful, as his contemporary readers relied on it to give an earnest yet graphic picture of the war. In contrast, in our modern, technological age, we can access vast amounts of media unavailable to Sassoon and his contemporaries, and can obtain first-hand accounts of war with ease, shown by the extensive media coverage of the recent troubles in Libya and Syria. A modern reader's adaption to this may make ~~Sassoon's work~~ war literature less compelling, as we are more accustomed to the images in the novels and poetry than Sassoon's contemporary audience. ~~The New York Times' review of Barker's language as "Pathetically unromantic" could support this - some~~ The Guardian's review of Barker's language as "Artistic" could support this - some modern readers are not as appalled by the horrors of war as in Sassoon's initial reception.

~~Moreover~~ Furthermore, Parker's "Penelope" can show an alternate portrayal of the sufferings of war, as it shows how war's consequences can ~~observers of war can suffer~~ resonate to observers - not just to combatants as outlined previously. She describes a women left by her husband to fight as: "I shall sit at home, and rock; rise," ~~Her use of~~ Her frequent use of punctuation creates caesuras, slowing the pace of the poem, showing the monotonous nature

of Penelope's life, and how dull her life has come when she has been seperated from her lover. This is enhanced by Parker's use of simplistic monosyllabic lexis to further the monotonous tone of the persona's life. Similarly, Parker shows the seperation of a couple due to war in "The Ghoost Road" when she writes about Prior leaving Sarah for France. She writes "There was a fine rain blowing... Sarah's face pinched with cold", using pathetic fallacy to echo the sadness of the event. Such is the trauma of their seperation, even the weather is grieving, producing a haunting and moving depiction of how war can tear apart relationships. This aspect of the novel is extremely accurate to the number of marriages destroyed by World War One, and show why Parker recieved the praise from the New York Times that she was "Meticulously true to history".

However, "Penelope" has been interpreted differently by some readers as depicting how war can benefit women by helping them become independent. This modern reading reflects the new schools of thought that were not prevalent when Parker wrote "Penelope" in the 1950s, as feminism was not widely recognised until the sexual revolution in 1960s America. This has exposed a modern reader to new ideas, and could therefore dilute the view that war is for horror and suffering, as Parker's persona is seemingly benefited by war. This feminist approach can be proven by the fact that one critic criticised Parker as "Her female characters are few, and their interior lives unplumbed".

To conclude, a writer is responsible to bear witness to both the horrors and sufferings as well as the heroism and excitement of war, however the negative depiction of war drastically outweighs its

heroic interpretation. Hosseini, ~~Blacker~~ and Barker both feature heroic soldiers, and Barker shows the glory that is often associated with battle. But writers never exclude the fact that war is ultimately damaging and horrific to both combatants and observers, and show the destruction war causes on the landscape, as well as the individual. Additionally, contextual factors, such as advances in media, the chronology of the literary style, the historical relevency of a novel and a modern reader's exposure to new ideas could show how war literature, at part, ~~is~~ has a diminished effect on a modern reader compared to ~~the~~ Sassoon's contemporary audience.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Comparisons between the texts are mostly well sustained and there are some effective references to named critics. Short quotations from the texts demonstrate detailed textual knowledge.

The contextual reference in the middle of page 2 is made rather assertively and could be more precisely managed.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Show your knowledge of the texts with short relevant quotations.

Contexts should be precisely referenced and make a clear point which will move your argument forward.

This essay scores in the middle of bands 1 and 2, and low in band 3 for AOs 3 and 4.

Critics have often expressesed that writers should maintain certain responsibilities when it comes to war literature. The two opposing ideas of war: horror and suffering; heroism and excitment are often conflicted but indeed over-lap due to factors such as human instinct and morality.

Indeed it is true that Pat Barker wrote the regeneration trilogy with the notion to warn against war and educate the youth of today about the true horrors and suffering of the first world war. However even in her novels in order to take a realistic stance on the topic at hand she has had to offer up examples of the heroism and excitment of war.

The excitment of war in her novel, "The Ghost Road" is felt most strongly in ~~Doctor~~ Rivers' reflections on his time spent in Melanasia. The effect these reflections have on the novel as a whole is a depth of understanding of the excitment behind war in terms of human nature. Taken out of context of a society that ~~we~~ is familiar to those who would read the novel, the idea of head-hunting in the Melanasian community as fun is difficult to comprehend.

Barker describes head-hunting as "what

they life per" and "without it life lost all its zest", this annalysis of the excitment of war by the novelist who is activly anti-war is interesting as it shows an understanding that it is a writers responsibility to bear witness not only the horrors and suffering of war but also the heroism and excitment of war.

Dorothy Parker's, "Penelope" similarly deals with this contradiction. The first stanza has a loose structure representative of the freedom of the wife's 'heroic' husband. Parker uses a semantic feild of exciting and glamourous words to describe his actions: "silver seas", "quitting wave" this gives the impression of heroism and excitment. Also the references to the "sun", "breeze" and the "world" suggest that what he is acheiving is of higher significance. This is juxtaposed with the structured second stanza describing the wife's role while he is away "where the world and sky are one" she is left to "snip my thread". The imagry created with "snip" its sudden break is possibly a suggestion of her frustration.

The greek myth to which the poem is based centres around the idea that Penelope remains faithful to her husband as he goes

away to be a hero. However the myth says that her husband was infact ~~unfaithful~~ unfaithful to her while he was away. The poem is a possible reflection on this and could be saying that everything is not as it seems with a hero. ~~Like~~ Similarly to ~~the~~ the Melanasian's the "zest" factor appears to be the pulling factor more so than genuine heroism.

This idea is one that ~~the~~ a contempory reader of the "Ghost Road" will understand in a way which a reader in the time of World War One would have struggled with. The horrors that Barker writes about so graphically were kept from the public while the war was going on. The hub of patriotism and sending young heros to the front line ~~was~~ gave way to a feeling of pride and unity.

Therefore when writers did feel in was their responsibility ~~to~~ to write about the true horrors of war, they were often court marshalled or sent to a mental institution. Siegfried Sassoon was such a writer, who's letters and poetry when published resulted in him ending up in Craiglocknart.

His poem "Suicide in the Trenches" deals with such horrors of war: "bullet through his brain", the plosive sounds create a

monosylabic simplicity that is all the more sinister for its matter of fact tone. Sassoon's last stanza of the poem attack's the public " Who cheer when soldier lads" for sending them to the "hell where youth and laughter go"; as a general of the war Sassoon was speaking out from first hand experiene.

His actions and his desision to go back to the front line are a possible indication that the statement is indeed true; it is the responsibility of the writer to bear witness both to the horrors and suffenings as well as the heroism and excitment of war.

Like Barker's character Billy Prior, Sassoon returned to the front line to fight alonside their men dispite the fact they disagreed with the war intirely, an indication of possibly not excitment but indeed heroism.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Although the reference to an unnamed critic is unhelpful, the opening paragraph does address the various facets of the question.

The discussion does tend to focus on one text at a time.

The range of reference is fairly narrow with discussion of only two poems.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Show evidence of wide reading from the texts you have studied as far as possible.

Acknowledge a critic by name if you refer to one.

Try to make consistent cross-references between the texts wherever possible.

Question 6(b)

We received many fewer answers to 6b than 6a. It was on the whole handled less successfully because of a narrow interpretation of 'protest' as merely suggesting and illustrating the idea that war is wrong.

Paper Summary

Good answers showed detailed engagement with the texts and clear attention to the relevant assessment objectives.

They also focused clearly on the terms of the proposition.

They were consistently literary in their approach.

Less good answers were much more uneven in their coverage.

Weaknesses include:

- inadequate support from other readers (AO3).
- lack of specific or relevant contextualisation
- evidence of a narrow range of reading
- a lack of a consistent literary manner of writing.

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