

9ELO 03

GCE English

Language & Literature
Coursework

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Leaving London

I walked down the carriage towards a spare seat on the underground, after having wandered around the last parts of London I could bear to face after losing her. We ended things and she decided it was right for me to leave. Like always, I obliged. As I sat down I felt my body relax into the seat like it always has, and the familiar scenes around me unfolded. The elderly ladies who, like vultures, take their claim of the seats, scowling at every person who attempts to steal them. The business people whose uniforms seem overdressed yet the norm in the tunnels of the underground. Then there's the plain yet pretty girls who can't help but catch your eye, like she did. The way she clutched her coffee cup letting the warmth from it seep through her hands and disperse into the rest of her body. The way she always seemed to have a yawn in the back of her throat, fighting its way out to cause a scene. However, there were no girls like her on the underground today.

Instead I sat there, staring mindlessly at my own reflection in the black abyss opposite me. It was only then did I realise what a mess I was. My hair had become unkempt and the dark rings under my eyes became the my main feature; shaping it after what had been the most ruthless couple of days. We both knew that the end was coming soon but how soon I really wasn't expecting. It all happened so quickly; one day we were happy and comfortable in each other's arms. Next she left, claiming the city as hers and banishing me for reasons I'm not overly sure of myself. Maybe I didn't satisfy her enough to keep me here, I keep on thinking that maybe she'll call me, begging me not to leave, to spend one last night with her. But the call never came and the night will never occur.

Trudging off the tube I left the safety of the Central Line, and changed to the Victoria Line. I slowed a little, streams of people pushed past me, obviously desperate to reach their destination. Whether it be to their families, partners or just to their cold empty house like I was. The escalators trap the wind of the outside in a confining tunnel whilst the lovers drift past in Aphrodite's spell. The longing for her simple caress was almost overpowering. I could feel the turmoil building up inside me, the desire to go back to her, to sort things out, to make us, us again. We shouldn't have left things the way we did, it wasn't fair on either of us, and now I have to leave. I call London my home, because it is just as much mine as it is hers. The next stop was King's Cross, the final step, the step for her to finally be rid of me. Her wish, definitely not mine. Pressing my head back against the wall of the tube, adjusting my footing slightly in a preparation stance for me to think about what the hell I'm doing. I wanted to look back at London, to retrace my steps and keep what I had with London alive. I don't want the memories I hold so dear to be blackened by her, to make me never want to come back in fear of the chance that I'd run into her again.

And like Orpheus, I couldn't look back, I couldn't turn around and face the memories I longed to be back in. I had to carry on going, up the familiar steps that would lead me into a new beginning, to some kind of hope that could pull me out of the dark abyss she had dug for me. But I couldn't. I stood there frozen at the base of the steps, being knocked by the continuous stream of passerbys. Knowing that the white noise that was ringing in my ears was directed at me. Ignoring them, I focused on the deliberation that was taking over my mind. To stay or to go. Such a simple decision, but why couldn't I make it? Why couldn't I carry on, take the next step and walk up the stairs? I didn't want to breach our agreement but I couldn't leave London forever. It had become a part of me, a part that I didn't want to lose over a girl who shattered my heart. Slowly I turned around, not wanting to look at what was in front of me. I expected everything around me to fade, to dissipate into thin air and leave me stranded in a place I didn't know, to see her disappointed and angry face because she followed me here, making sure that I left. A sense of defeat overwhelmed me when I finally looked to see that everything was exactly the same as it was before. There was no disappearance or loss of memories. London was still there as it was before- but just no.us.

Clear scribbles - some around topics but engaging and
well-organized. Evidence of editing and rewriting. An
engaging piece with effective appeal to reader. Long
audience & purpose.

Possibly low 4 - Engaging and skillful

Tourist Attractions? 8th August 2016

Yes, it must be tourist season, I thought to myself as I managed to squeeze onto the carriage that would take me from Victoria Station to Oxford Circus. What would usually be at most a 5 minute walk from platform 17 became nearly 15 minutes weaving my way through the endless crowd of confused and lost people, staring aimlessly at either their phones or their giant foldable maps, which never seem to last more than a day.

Now, it may seem like I'm being rude. I'm not, I love tourists as much as I love late trains, they're an inconvenience but honestly, I'm over it. It's just frustrating when you want to get from one place to another and all there seems to be is this massive wall of people. I'm not a crowd person, in fact, I'm not much of a people person either. I find them difficult, I get flustered easily and I'm not very good at the talking part either, particularly giving directions. London isn't my home but I do visit quite often, like you would an old friend, so I don't exactly know the ins and outs of the tube map or what line goes to where, but like everyone else I try my best- brave a smile and blurt out what could be a plausible answer.

engaging
voice
although
faintly
sounded

If I'm honest, it's not the tourists that annoy me the most, it's the fact that they don't get to experience the real London. Of course I'm generalising here, it seems like they just get sucked into the vacuum of the commercialised capitalist money-making schemes that are the tourist 'highlight' of London. Let's be honest, they are tacky, overpriced and factually vacuous with no intellectual content. These theme park style attractions represent all that London isn't, they are produced for people with shallow minds and a non inquisitive nature - London has more heart than that. M&M World, Ripley's Believe It Or Not, Shrek's Adventure, these modern attractions make the city more globally accessible. Maybe tourists feel comfortable that there is something safe and recognisable? But why does London feel the need to dilute its culture and heritage with these forms of entertainment which frankly have nothing to do with London? Like 'Big Top Bus Tours!!!' for example, they give you a whistle-stop tour of the outside of London without adventuring in. As a tourist there is so much more to see of London by walking around rather than isolating yourself by sitting on a manmade metal machine.

alienation
in reality not
very
impressive

Some people could argue that London should provide something for everyone, and that these new 'attractions' keep the city up to date and competitive, they keep the city fresh and revisitable. But at the same time they are standardising the city. These themed attractions are practically the same in every country, they just adapt and change to suit the environment in which they're in. Art galleries and museums are present in literally every major city yet they stand alone, different from each other because of the exhibits they display. People flock to see them, for example, the Turners at Tate Britain and in Paris, the French Impressionists at Musée D'Orsay. This is true substance and culture which tourists should be seeing. It is intellectual and historical.

normal
me of
additional
generals

What makes London, London are its unique attractions, built upon over the centuries. Unchanged and faithful to the capital which give it its identity- Harrods, Liberties, St Paul's Cathedral. All these places are special to London, and would still have the same influx of people coming to them even if the themed ones left. This displays that without them, London keeps turning and they provide no real addition to the city. In a deluded way I can understand why people are drawn to these type of things; they're flashy and fill up a day. Maybe it's because I live so close that I can go to these particular attractions at any point in my life, they

are consistently going to be there, no matter what. Maybe it's because when on holiday I never did the typical 'tourist attractions' because my dad, like myself, thought they didn't provide a true scope on the city and the culture that lies within it. It's not like I'm completely opposed to them, I have been to a few myself only to come out feeling as though I've wasted a day and the £14.50 to go ice skating for 45 minutes could have been better spent elsewhere.

Whilst there is an element of London which will always promote a generic tourist-side, just as much as Brixton and Camden will always be associated with the music scene, Chelsea will always be known as up market, and Canary Wharf as the business sector. But that doesn't change what London is, yes London is built upon the booming tourist industry which is what keeps the bustle of London alive. Without this London would simply be the same as any other town in Britain, except larger. Whilst I personally wish that the more typical and 'tacky' tourist attractions weren't around to dampen London, but in a way I do have a resentful appreciation to them. They give joy to people and bring them together from across the globe. I just think that there is a more eloquent way to capture the tourists interests to visit London that isn't through tasteless attractions that add no real value to London as a city. Yet, I suppose that they've have their place no matter how much I despise them.

See you next time. ?

Some engaging attempts at crafting to create a positive, low
style & tone. Clear understanding of genre/mode/function.
Topics is accurate in places but largely well controlled.

For my fiction writing I chose to write a short story on a man leaving London after a breakup, something which inspired to write this was the Greek myth, Orpheus and Eurydice. I wanted to capture the element of not being able to look back at something in the fear of losing it forever. However, within my own writing I have changed this because my main character, doesn't know what his decision is, but either way will lose the girl at the end. He fears losing London and is deliberating whether he will stay or go. The source text which has inspired my story is *District and Circle* by Seamus Heaney, this is because of its underlying metaphor of fate. In the poem, the main character's fate is determined for him through the act of the tube doors closing and taking him away from the busker. 'Had I betrayed or not, myself or him?' The rhetorical use of repetition of the word 'or' reveals the sense of uncertainty he has about not giving the busker money, the use of parallel phrasing further connotes the feeling of guilt and possibly the feeling of being in the same position as the busker. *needs a link to the Greek myth*

In my own fiction text, *Leaving London*, the use of a first person narrative enables me to delve deeper into my main character and to highlight certain emotions and ideas which I wouldn't be able to do if it were in third person. I decided to focalise the experience of a breakup and travelling through London's underground in one as it allowed me to develop aspects of characterisation; whilst being able to describe elements of the underground, for example the people who travel.

Similarly, in my source poem, *District and Circle*, London is also represented through the eyes of someone taking the underground, however, it draws parallels with Greek Mythology, by the busker being represented as Charon, the ferryman of the underworld. Because of this I have also explored the themes of Greek Mythology by incorporating the story of Orpheus and Eurydice as an extended metaphor, and the idea of my character leaving London and not wanting to look back in the fear of losing everything he had.

I have used specific literary and linguistic devices to represent the hurt that my character is feeling, through this my story has evolved and allowed my readers to feel connected to the character. Throughout the story I've used the abstract concept of memories as a way of adding depth to the story: 'the desire to go back to her, to sort things out, to make us, us again.' this rhetorical use of parallel phrasing and list of three presents his overall desire to stay in London and supposedly try to fix things between them, however as the story develops his resentment towards his now ex-girlfriend is clear. My lexical choices reveals that my character is in turmoil over leaving London, this is evidenced by the use of rhetorical question, 'To stay or to go, such a simple decision but why couldn't I make it?' the adjective 'simple' highlights that the character knows that the decision is suppose to be easy, however, because of the idea that it is plausible for him to stay.

Overall, through this writing process I have learnt a lot more how to refine my writing and tailor it to a specific brief. The theme of London was challenging at first as it was difficult to come up with ideas that were unique London and couldn't applied to any other city, whilst making sure that our writings were linked to the source texts that we had been looking at. However, I believe that my own writing has fulfilled task given.

- Ab1 Ideas are structured by reading a few paragraphs. Clear use of literary devices to make an argument, and the evidence is well presented.
- Ab2 Clear understanding of the writing is focused and well structured.
- Ab3 Explains clearly about the context.
- Ab4 Explains the connections between sources and created texts, supported by relevant evidence.

Commentary

The theme of London enables me to research and cover a wide range of different elements of what I believe London to be. For both the non-fiction and fiction, we looked at a spread of different styles of writings; including poems, essays and short stories. These inspired me to come up with ideas for my two texts. The form of my two texts will be, a blog post for my non-fiction, and a short story for my fiction. I decided on these because I felt like both these genres were best suited to my own writing style.

For my nonfiction I focused on the tourist side of London, in particular the 'theme-styled' tourist attractions which usually take place on the South Bank or Hyde Park. I decided to write a satirical blog post in the style of columnist, Charlie Brooker, I did this because I inspired by his style of writing. The purpose of my blog and writing style is so I am more able to explain my distaste for the tourist attractions, but also highlighting other areas of London that are more worthy of time, whilst it being a semi-formal piece of writing. The use of a first person voice enabled me to present my own personal opinion in a more informal way than what would usually be expected from a standard blog post. The use of first person narration to establish a sense of a voice is achieved through the use of parallel phrasing. *'I love tourists almost as much as I love late trains'* which connotes that both the idea of late trains and tourists hold the same status in my eyes. By comparing tourists with trains it highlights the temperamental nature of them, but also reveals that whilst they can be frustrating, they do serve a purpose in London.

The source text which influenced my nonfiction work is the essay, *'Resurgam'* by Peter Ackroyd, as I am inspired by his ideas of change throughout London and how these changes in London have sparked a new 'era'. Not only this, the extended metaphor, in which he uses to represent London and its layers of history has influenced my work; *'London has opened up'*. The metaphor reveals that over time the discoveries made about London has caused it to open up and, to an effect, change and shape London to what it is today. This is also highlighted by the use of abstract nouns *'optimism and confidence'* these display how London is wise and spiritual as it has grown older and with that it has acquired layers which all add to its history and being. However, in my own writing I decided to argue against this, by stating that the all the history that London has layered up is being trampled by the tourist attractions which do not display or take notice of, the enriched culture that London holds. I have displayed this through the negative lexical choices to describe the disdain towards the over-capitalised tourist attractions that are dotted around London. *'Let's be honest, they are tacky, overpriced and factually vacuous with no intellectual content.'* The register is quite informal due to the use of the contraction *'let's'*, however, this contrasts with the rest of the syntax where I have used the phrase *'factually vacuous'* which has formal connotations of being mindless and having a lack of intelligence.

The readership for the new text would be the all generations, who feel the same disdain that I do about theme-styled attractions and how they standardise London and make it more globally accessible. Whereas, the readerships of my source would be of an older generation who have a specific interest in history, and how it affects the rest of London.

Bibliography

Nonf: Ackroyd, Peter, Resurgam, London: The Biography, Vintage, 2001.

fiction: Heaney, Seamus, District and Circle, Spaar, Lisa Russ (ed.), All That Mighty Heart, University of Virginia Press, 2008.

London-themed Anthology of poetry