

9ELO 03

GCE English

Language & Literature
Coursework

Folder 2

Commentary

My two pieces of coursework are based on the topic of society and the individual. I particularly focused on the refugee crisis in Afghanistan and how it has deeply affected individuals, a topic which is relevant in the present world. My non-fiction piece is an opinion article for The Guardian newspaper and was inspired by Sylvia Pankhurst's article, *Human Suffrage* (taken from *Cupcakes and Kalashnikovs*), in relation to voice and persuasive techniques. *Wrath as refugee deportations resume* (WARDR) is intended for adults who are aware of current affairs concerning refugees, the purpose is to persuade them to sympathise with the plight of these refugees. *Tariq*- my fictional piece was inspired by Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (ATSS) when discussing description of scenery and using hyperboles to dramatise events. The purpose of my fiction text is to entertain and inform and would be read by those who would enjoy an individual's first-hand account on this current crisis and read Hosseini's work.

The triplets and alliteration within the article generate a sympathetic tone and consequently results in the persuasion of the reader. The plosive alliteration "Conflicts, coups and catastrophes" and "Wrath as refugee deportations resume", reinforces the extent of trauma within Afghanistan, with the harshness of the 'c' and 'r' creating a tone of brutality. The use of the negative triad stresses the situation in Afghanistan and shapes the reader's views.

This is similar to the way in which Pankhurst writes, for instance the use of "petty, ill-drafted, fugitive politicians rule". Similar techniques are shown in the short story. The

plosive alliteration of "Prolonged, perilous" also gives an indication of the harsh tone and the elevated adjectives give the reader the ability to relate to the character's thoughts of despair and suffering.

My short story, *Tariq*, uses hyperbolic language in order to portray the extremes in which Afghans have to live, to enable the reader to sympathise with the character of Tariq. For instance, "only an unkempt, sandy ditch at the side of the derelict, winding road to be used as a burial site." is an example of this. Yet this contrasts to the demotic language used by the minor characters such as "you fool" and the man's imperative "move" as it furthers the reader's sympathy towards the helpless character of Tariq. The lexical field of trauma at the opening "Sorrow, death and panic" contrasts with the uplifting lexis in the conclusion: "hope", "embraced". The use of this oxymoron was inspired by Hosseini's *ATSS* as he creates a stark difference between sections of the book to create a fluctuation in tone from a colloquial traumatic tone and then to an uplifting elevated one. Similarly, in the article *WARDR* begins with an elevated tone compact with statistics: "15% of land...", "95% of its population feeling" yet this tone changes to a sardonic one in a ridiculing voice and the satire provokes humour. "Perhaps we should send May there herself to see if it is truly as safe as she believes?". The humour conveys my personal opinion- the Government's decision to deport refugees is entirely wrong. This was inspired by the sardonic tone in *Human Suffrage* "a million votes for thirteen million women".

Tariq consists of numerous short paragraphs and has few areas of dialect. "An air of melancholy suffocated him" the use of this personification exemplifies the loneliness and the deadly effect it has on the characters. Compound modifiers such as "muddy brown" are used to reinforce the mundane surroundings in respect to the augmented description. Yet *WARDR* is composed of a series of short paragraphs in an attempt to make the form clear and easy to navigate when reading. I have used a one-line paragraph at the end for impact and to reinforce my views on the topic.

Both pieces use deictic markers in an attempt to guide the reader. In *WARDR* the use of "yesterday" and "on the 14th of July 2016" help the reader place themselves in the context of the period, a technique that is also used in Pankhurst's article, examples include "the war", "after the war". Time markers are also used in *Tariq*. "The seventeenth day of August" and "five days had passed" give an indication of the time scale that the story is set over and are helpful to place the reader in the wider context. This feature is used in Hosseini's work "A week passed" and "On April 17, 1978". These help to convey the theme of desperation within the short story and within the article, highlight the relevance of the news story.

Tariq has a cyclical structure to give the piece a clear beginning and end. The character of Laila is mentioned particularly at these points. The motif of the candle is used to symbolise the various stages of Tariq's journey. "Two wax bleeding candles", "A vivid flame grew within him" and "he felt hope like a kindling flame" are used to symbolise hope or the lack of hope the character of Tariq is experiencing. This structure completes the story and enables the different sections of the piece to intertwine. However, *WARDR* has a simple chronological structure yet the anecdote of Noor Muhammad helps to create a basic cyclical structure in order to increase emotion.

Similes are used in both pieces of my work. In *WARDR* similes such as, "Afghans seeking freedom are treated like circus animals" are used to portray the dehumanisation of these innocent civilians. It is known widely how "circus animals" are treated and therefore this would be a suitable description in order to trigger emotion within the reader. I did not want to include too many similes within my opinion article as I wanted to maintain the elevated register. However, in the short story *Tariq*, I was able to incorporate a number of similes in an attempt to increase the description and ultimately create a clear image of each setting,

character and the emotions they were experiencing. My stimulus text ATSS inspired this use of similes "entered his lungs like a wave of dirt", "scurried around him like a delicate mouse" and "abruptly like a spider" as the use of nature helps to portray the rawness of the situation.

My texts generate various responses and attitudes within the audience. Whilst my short story is written to entertain and create emotion, my article is written to persuade the reader into an alternative way of thinking and perceiving the refugee crisis. Ultimately, both of my pieces of work highlight the realistic struggles of those living in Afghanistan.

Word Count: 1086

A controlled and sophisticated use of language and literary devices to create a sense of atmosphere and to convey a message for specific purposes.

Tariq

The seventeenth day of August - with it came the thick, oppressive, dusty air that makes your mouth dry and your lips stick to one another with a paper thin layer of saliva.

Immediately
sets the
scene

Today was the day Tariq's entire world would change. He was leaving Kabul. Leaving his home, his school and the only thing that truly mattered to him. Laila. A chaotic atmosphere consumed Tariq's house that humid morning. As the rush to pack their belongings had begun, his mother had to manage alone, Tariq had been no use since the night before. He couldn't stop thinking about the moments he had shared with Laila. The excitement in his throbbing veins lingered and the memory of the unlawful act he had committed filled his whole being with joy, albeit intertwined with the heart breaking reality that soon he would be thousands of miles away from the girl he loved - in Pakistan.

The muddy brown walls of Tariq's home stood in the beating sun, the cracks at the surface resembling the broken city they once called home. The darkness produced an intimate atmosphere in a country filled with sorrow, death and panic. Electricity was inadequate and the service was only available on the rarest of occasions; the family relied on two wax bleeding candles to bring little light into their home. Pillows and blankets scattered the floor in an informal fashion marking where they had prayed, slept and eaten for the past fifteen years. A simple table stood in the centre of the room piled high with naan, rice and oil - food they would consume on their prolonged, perilous journey.

carefully
chosen Laila

Tariq's father lay uncomfortably on the cushioned floor, hardly able to move after a series of strokes he had endured. A man once full of enthusiasm, knowledge and happiness had lost his identity after the Taliban had sucked the life out of Kabul in 1996. He rested there until the time came for the family to depart Afghanistan. Whilst his wife scurried around him like

a delicate mouse, sorting and packing, packing and sorting, he simply settled there on the floor only offering what little he could to the conversation - a painful grunt of disapproval.

effective use of imagery

"Tariq!" his mother proclaimed sternly from the neighbouring room. "It's time".

With that, Tariq sprinted past his mother and out of the splintering wooden door. His desperation to find Laila was overwhelming. A vivid flame grew within him; he felt hope.

Sweat dripped from his brow and coated his clothes like a layer of grease, clinging to his skin and he tasted the salty bile in the back of his throat. His leg, which was now much too small for his manly physique, loosened from its socket, yet he continued to run. After what felt like an eternity, Tariq finally stopped. He gasped for air but was met by the polluted atmosphere that entered his lungs like a wave of dirt. Accepting the harsh reality, Tariq walked back to his home with his shoulders slumped and his head hanging low like an old, unloved rag doll.

descriptive language

He was out of time and luck.

Effective use of simile

Tariq reluctantly returned to his home where he was met by a murky white van and a vicious, moustached, middle aged man. It had cost his parents ten Afghani to persuade the vile driver to wait for their son, leaving them almost penniless for the rest of the journey.

✓ Climbing into the vehicle, Tariq was greeted by glaring eyes and cuss words. He was overcome by cries of women and the pungent odour of urine. As he glanced at his family home for a final time, he saw the ashen smoke from the candles afloat in the stale air.

"What the hell took you so long?" a large aged woman shouted from the rear.

Another faceless woman yelled breathlessly, "I need a hospital; my baby has been sick for weeks, you selfish fool!"

Tariq sat, his head still hung low. An air of melancholy suffocated him. With that he shut his weary, blood shot eyes and fell asleep.

He was woken an hour later by the fearful shouts and cries of several panic stricken men.

"Move!" a man exclaimed.

"Quickly!" yelled another.

"Everybody out!" echoed from the enclosed van.

Tariq gained his balance and helped his weak, frail parents out the doors of the van. As he looked back, he spotted a young girl. She must have been about seven or eight. Dehydration had caused her to suffer seizures. Her body moved abruptly and sharply like a spider. Her rounded head thrashed against the faeces infested floor, creating a colony of incisions on her dainty youthful skull. Blood danced around like fireflies. The whites of her eyes were ghostly and pure. Her long, skinny limbs pounded the floor as her sobbing parents desperately attempted to restrain her.

Everyone fell silent as the lifeless body was carried out. There were no blankets to shield young spectators; there was to be no formal ceremony, only an unkempt, sandy ditch at the side of the derelict, winding road to be used as a burial site. Despite the day being overwhelmingly torrid, Tariq's skin felt icy cold as the shock of what he had just witnessed melted into his veins.

Hours passed and the journey resumed. Time went by excruciatingly slowly. Only a few had the pleasure of sleeping; those exempt from sleep would force themselves awake. Many did

not wish to sleep due to the impounding fear of a Kalashnikov muzzle being edged into their temple- a possibility that was all too likely.

Darkness had arrived. Tariq dreamt of Laila; their night together had only been twenty-four hours ago. The memory, so vivid in his perplexed mind could never be erased. Was she regretting rejecting his marriage proposal? Did she regret the love they had shared? Tariq's naive mind was a pandemonium of 'what ifs'. He wondered when he would return to his beloved Kabul and whether his old life would ever be restored.

Development of character is strong

Five days had passed. The indestructible wheels turned until they reached their destination.

A gentle hum grew from outside of the van. Islamabad anticipated his arrival. As the doors swung open, Tariq and his fatigued parents were embraced with an excitable buzz. Circling them, were rows upon rows of tents and welcoming faces. Blending into the plain landscape, these bland, beige pieces of cloth are what they would call home. The sky was a bright iridescent blue; the sun shone like a polished coin, bathing Tariq in the vivid orange sunset.

Vivid description

An ambiance of joy immersed him. For the first time since he fled Afghanistan, he felt hope like a kindling flame. He would be reunited with Laila again.

Sophisticated lexical choice

1122 words

This is a highly convincing piece of the journey as Tariq has been effectively developed. All the descriptions make the piece believable in terms of setting, etc.

Wrath as refugee deportations resume

20th July 2016

Was the new Prime Minister's decision to return failed asylum seekers a wise one? investigates this contentious issue.

Yesterday, Prime Minister, Theresa May, deemed Afghanistan now safe for refugees to return after the Court of Appeal agreed that deportations should resume. This move was both bold, brutal and certainly unforeseen. The Afghan people have seen nothing but war for decades, causing it to become the world's largest refugee-producing country for 32 years. May's decision was supposedly made on the basis that there has been a 56% increase in the number of orphaned asylum seekers.

After years of conflict, coups and catastrophes are we to believe that Afghanistan has miraculously developed in to a place of peace and tranquillity that opens its arms out to its returning habitants? Or is it that no first world country is willing to offer their support and shelter to those in dire need? Had England been in a situation similar to that in Afghanistan, affairs would certainly be very different. Perhaps we should send May there herself to see if it is truly as safe as she believes?

Twenty years after the Taliban seized the Afghan capital of Kabul, I, along with countless others, am surely contemplating whether this country filled with conflict, death and sorrow can possibly be secure enough for its residents' return. With 95% of its population fleeing to neighbouring Iran and Pakistan and 15% of land being controlled by ISIS and the Taliban, we ask ourselves the age old question: 'Is Afghanistan truly safe?'

2015 was the year that saw most recorded civilian casualties in Afghanistan; yet flights to Kabul have begun returning hundreds to their war-torn country. This follows a declaration

Immediate
sort of
form and
purpose

Research
how
clearly
can a
to add
strength
the number

should be
applied
2016

that the capital was safe enough for their return. Scenes of savagery have had a devastating impact of these innocent civilians resulting in a rising suicide rate -2300 women and girls end their own lives each year due to mental illness.

use of statistics to support violence.

The definition of 'safe' was exemplified when on the 14th July 2016, the world watched in shock as a Tunisian ISIS member, drove his lorry into those celebrating Bastille Day in the French city of Nice. In Afghanistan, events such as these occur on a daily basis, making the country potentially more unstable than ever. Individuals are exposed to disease, kidnappings and starvation, yet the rest of the world allows these actions to take place (and) while heads of state merely sit back on their recliner sofas with popcorn in hand.

use of statistics to support violence.

Afghans seeking freedom are treated like circus animals, cooped up in small boats without basic necessities. Dehumanised civilians have lost their identity and encounter the same awful fate when they have reached their so called 'places of sanctuary' and are faced with the horrific certainty that they will be without shelter and food.

These people, including infants, youths, elderly and the suffering have trekked hundreds of miles to reach their refuge only to be rejected and returned like cargo. Those who remain have to stay in makeshift accommodation, in the freezing conditions. Walking miles to collect food and water can be a deadly journey for the weak.

use of statistics to support violence.

Noor Muhammad fled to Pakistan when he was only 12 years of age after the village of Baghlan was seized by the Soviets. The attacks on the Twin Towers in 2001, resulted in Afghans being rejected from Pakistan and have urged refugees to depart to Afghanistan. He has taken it upon himself to return to his homeland despite the uncertain future that his family faces. This unstable lifestyle is all Noor and his family know.

Having minimal options, Noor has had to make the decision to return to Afghanistan due to the lack of money. "We don't have the money to pay passport fees for all our family, which numbers over 40. So we thought it was time to go." Others like Noor are left no option. He will have to take the perilous journey with his young children and wife to a place where safety is a luxury. ✓

✓ effective use of deontological

The recent broadcast of the TV documentary *The Forgotten Children* highlighted the day to day struggles of refugee youths and the impact this situation has had on them. These children are now stranded in Europe after facing violence in the places deemed to be "safe". ✓

A particularly shocking scene detailed an English Aid workers account of a 7-year-old boy who had contemplated suicide after losing both his parents whilst seeking asylum. This is an uncommon thought for a boy of such a young age and actions need to be taken to prevent anyone in this situation taking their lives. ✓

✓ emotive example

Whilst housing such vast numbers would undeniably pose a threat to security and order, the solidarity of ministers from neighbouring countries has been noticed as they have discussed these hurdles for the safety of all civilians. Returning those who have come to England, as Theresa May proposes, would produce more conflict and cause our new Prime Minister to be viewed in a cynical light along with other European Countries (not ideal after Brexit). Yet again we are exposing ourselves to more public criticism. ✓

As a Nation we can offer basic necessities such as food, healthcare and security which could change the lives of Afghan refugees and help in reducing the ever rising death toll. ✓

Word Count: 893

✓ summarising

A persuasive opinion for that article.
The tone is appropriate for the purpose sustained.
Demonstrates an excellent control of language, made
an audience to a high level.

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