

# ResultsPlus

Examiners' Report

June 2011

GCE English Literature 6ET03 01

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## **Introduction**

We saw a range of often very good answers and those achieving in the very lowest bands were few and far between. The very best answers showed detailed knowledge of their texts and impressive skills of analysis and evaluation. We were very pleased to see more answers than before on questions 4a and b in Section B of the paper.

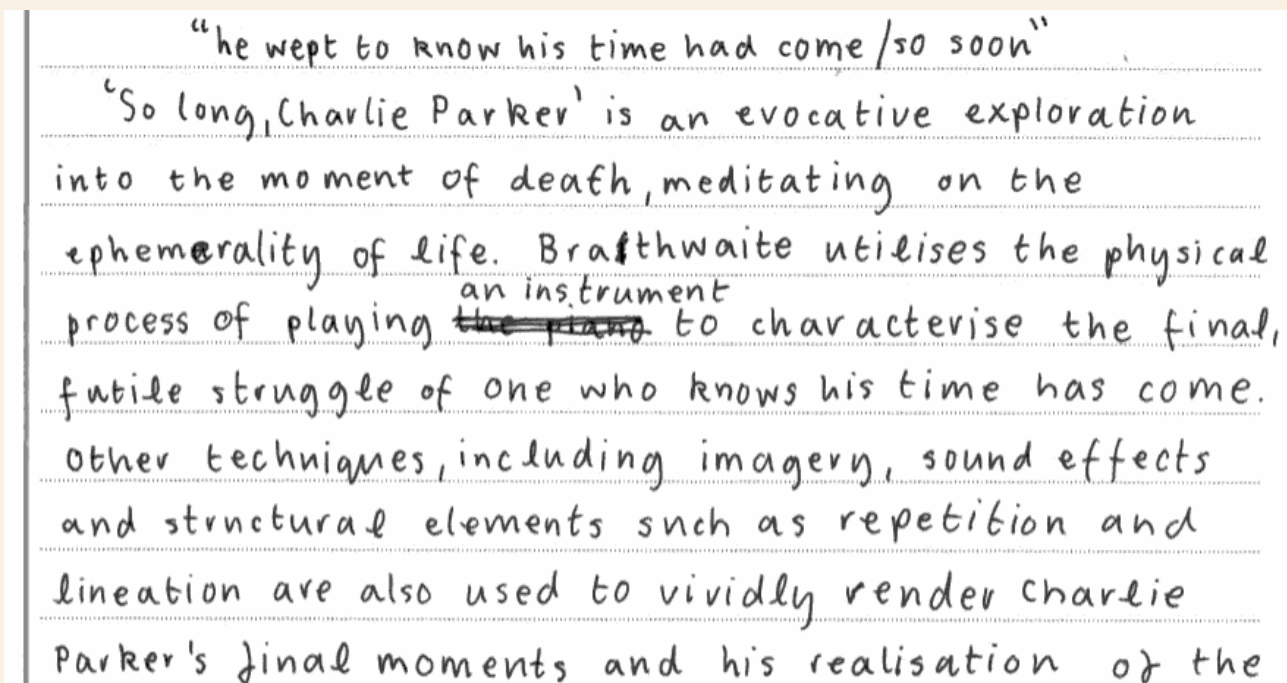
Candidates are often very confident at making comparison between texts and the very best ones show impressive ability to incorporate views of other readers. Contexts are still unevenly dealt with but once again the best answers show impressive knowledge which enables them to score in the top two bands for AO4. Candidates who performed less well showed inappropriate or inaccurate use of terminology. Similarly some candidates did not make consistent comparisons between texts, or show sufficient awareness of other readers; or make appropriately detailed references to contexts other than generalisations about the modern reader.

## Question 1

This was by far the most popular of the unseen options. The poem proved to be an excellent discriminator of the quality of analysis that actually responded to the words on the page. We read many detailed answers that had responded to the poem in detail and explored its language and free, improvisatory structure.

When assessing AO1 we are looking for a literary approach to the writing, a confident use of terminology and the ability to explore the effects of particular features on what the writer is saying. We also look for correct and appropriate use of English. Although we are tolerant of slips that may be inevitable under exam conditions, we are surprised at the level of inaccuracy in the spelling of common words and literary terms. The much greater number of marks for AO2 can be used to discriminate in some detail between those who may be just feature spotting (with varying levels of accuracy) and those who show how technique is used to enhance meaning. For example, the exploration of the poem's musical imagery enabled candidates to realise that it is about a musician and that the mood is elegiac as the writer explores his subject's premature death and the brevity of life. They understood that a minor key is associated with sad or angry music. It was certainly not necessary to know exactly who Charlie Parker was or that his nickname was 'Bird' to arrive at a clear understanding of the poem. We are not assessing context, so such knowledge is not necessary. Exploration of the meaning of 'bird' in the context of the poem itself varied a great deal, but any valid interpretation of what the words on the page signify was rewarded. There were some interesting comments on the structure of the poem such as its hourglass shape and the twelve short lines representing the sound of the striking bell which most identified as a signal that time is running out. Many candidates explored the verbal music achieved through the repeated use of alliteration, assonance and rhyme.

An example of part of a response that got marks in the top bands for each AO.



"he wept to know his time had come / so soon"

"So long, Charlie Parker" is an evocative exploration into the moment of death, meditating on the ephemerality of life. Braithwaite utilises the physical process of playing <sup>an instrument</sup> ~~the piano~~ to characterise the final, futile struggle of one who knows his time has come. Other techniques, including imagery, sound effects and structural elements such as repetition and lineation are also used to vividly render Charlie Parker's final moments and his realisation of the

intrinsic opposition of life, that one does not know to take advantage of it until it is too late.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The opening paragraph is very well focused and literary in manner. The writer seems to know about Charlie Parker and uses the musical terminology effectively.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Get the examiner on your side as early in your response as possible through a confident literary style.

A candidate who has solid marks high in band 2 for AO1 and low in band 4 for AO2.

The end of the poem mimics the beginning of the poem with the image of the bird, only this time the bird walks, 'through fear through faith through frenzy'. The repetition of the first line invites the reader to think back to a time of innocence when death seems so far away. The repetition of 'through' and the alliteration of 'fear' 'faith' and 'frenzy' suggests the panic and desperation that Parker 'tried' but cannot 'hide' from time and death.

What I find really effective ~~about~~ about this poem is how the style and the ~~the~~ subject mimics the <sup>form</sup> ~~form~~ and structure; the length and position of lines correspond the particular message of the line itself. The poem addresses a universal theme of death and the continuity of time ~~in~~ effectively through ~~the~~ the imagery, ~~poetic~~ carefully devised poetic techniques and ~~careful~~ careful design of the poem.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The conclusion to the essay has some valid points on structure and provides a clear personal response.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

A good conclusion is as valuable as a good introduction

Chosen question number: Question 1

Question 2

The poet Kamau Brathwaite presents the reader with a ~~the~~ famous musician's, Charlie Parker's, struggle to reconcile himself with his death "the night before he died". The relationship between the music he longs to create and the ~~and~~ inevitable silence that follows each notes mirrors his own fight against his impending death. The reserved persona observes mournfully but reflectively on the character Charlie Parker's struggle to perform in life and in music. The free verse of the poem reflects the jazz style of music Parker is famous for but also the reflections of the poet on the brevity of time are emphasised through line length.

The sense of the inevitable death of ~~the~~ Charlie Parker is foregrounded in the first ~~the~~ line of the poem, "the night before he died" highlighting for the reader that ~~poet's~~ although there will be a struggle between ~~the~~ character and his death, the death cannot be prevented and will recur at the end. The same phrase is repeated in the final stanza of the poem, when the imagery of a bird playing is expanded on ~~it~~ in light of the ~~poem's~~ discussion within the poem. The naturalistic ~~and~~ relaxed tone of the poet <sup>coupled with the lack of capitalisation and punctuation</sup> suggests the relaxed ~~and~~ style of jazz music as the poem does not conform to a strict structure, but is structured around the ideas ~~that~~ the poet is conveying to the reader. The recurring imagery of the bird at the start and end

of the poem reflects that although "he tried to hide", ~~himself~~ from death, he had to face it at the end of the poem, just as the poet, who observes as a neutral "we" and the reader does



well.

The relationship between music, ~~words~~<sup>time</sup> and the death of the character is reflected through the poet's choice of free verse ~~to~~ lament the death of Charlie Parker. The repetitions form as "so soon, so little had been done, / so little time to do it in" reinforces the ~~sign~~<sup>through</sup> sing song nature of the poem as the words take on the form of a song and repetition that oncoming death of the ~~the~~ musician. Similarly, the shortening of the lines in ~~the~~ lines 12-23 ~~just~~ exacerbates the ~~poet's~~<sup>poet's</sup> ~~musician's~~ knowledge that "time / is short / and life / is short / and breath / is short". The shortening of the lines conveys the sense of the musician's breath shortening and speeding onwards to his death, ~~just~~ like. The poet suggests a struggle between the character and time as in the ~~the~~ stanza following the one mentioned above where time seems to be triumphing in its struggle for the musician's life, the lines are still short and repetitions but through the imbalance <sup>and long vowel sounds</sup> of "slowed" ~~stopp~~ "so" and "slurred", ~~the~~ the poet suggests the musician's attempt to lengthen his time through his music. The figurative speech of music effectively conveys the musician's struggle to lengthen his remaining time, even if by the end of this stanza, ~~the~~ time triumphs as the poet reverts to the short plosive sounds of "stopped" and "slipped" as the musician loses his struggle.

The theme of the bird which appears at the start and end of the poem ~~the~~ suggests the musician's vulnerability to death. The connotations of the bird ~~are~~, by the ~~are~~ are of an animal who can fly and escape from the grounded world of reality, but as the poet describes in the ~~the~~ second line of the poem, "the

bird walked on", not flying. The bird in the poem is flightless and unable to escape from death; although this is not evident at the start of the poem, by the final stanza it is clear that the bird is the embodiment of the musician, unfeeling by the end and powerless to "stop that bell" although "he tried to hide". The bird begins by playing "with his heart out", a term of phrase commonly used to suggest a passionate performance and whilst the musician does attempt through music to avoid his death, the suggestion of his heart falling out foreshadows and prepares the reader for his inevitable death when the music comes to an end. The music is compared to in a simile pebbles falling "in a pond", forming ripples. ~~The strike~~ The second simile of the poem of the "great clock striking time from a great booming midnight bell" not only builds on the ominous suggestions of death already highlighted but, like the ripple simile, conveys the sense that "the silence" of ~~the~~ the musician's impending death will come "slowly throbbing" in behind the "dying bell" as the ripples will calm and the sound will fade. The inevitability suggested by these natural depictions of sound and energy coming to an end do not ~~highlight~~ emphasize the suffering

of the musician, instead they reflect the poet's attempt in the poem to convey the musician coming to terms with his own death.

In comparison with the rest of the poem, line 24-25 are emphasised through the ~~sound of the~~ prosaic diction as well as the language with Charlie Parker's desire to resist death. His struggle is for the first time suggested not



through similes or his relationship with music, but through his own body language - "His bright eyes blazed and bulged" in resistance to the death which is already inside him "knocking at the door" - another cliché often used to avoid the description of oncoming death. However, the repetition of the plosive b's convey his physical struggle which foreshadows the "frenzy" of the end of the poem. Whilst ~~the~~ ~~poet~~ the poet suggests that the musician is struggling against his death, given that it is "the death in him", ~~that~~ ~~to~~ ~~it~~ ~~on~~ the blazing and bulging could be viewed as death trying to burst out of his body.

The ~~the~~ relaxed punctuation allows the poet to more closely reflect the musician's struggle against death, as does the limited use of rhyme in the poem. The recurring <sup>rhyme of</sup> "died", "tried", "hide" in the final stanza gives the poem a forward momentum which prevents the musician from avoiding his impending death, the masculine rhymes pushing him inevitably onwards. ~~The~~ Adding to this sense of forward motion, the poet does without punctuation and exploits the alliterative technique to convey the ~~music~~ bird and

therefore the musician's panic at his own approaching death, the "through fear through faith through frenzy" not only draws on the ~~po~~ repetition to reinforce ~~the~~ the inescapability of death, but the lack of punctuation urges the reader on through the poem.

To conclude, the poet draws on Charlie Parker's part as a musician to try to render ~~the~~ ~~poet~~ ~~the~~ ~~poet~~ and convey his

struggle with his own death. Just as there is a struggle between music and silence, so too, it is suggested, there is a struggle between life and death, as one inevitably follows the other. The use of free verse reflects the jazz music Parker is famous for but also provides an effective form to suggest the struggle between time and life.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

This answer shows detailed understanding, a consistently literary style, a confident manner of writing and an informed personal response.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

This is how to get top marks.

## Question 2

Although this was by no means as popular a choice as the poem, examiners nevertheless saw answers which covered the whole range of achievement. Lower band answers tended to be descriptive in manner with more emphasis on the religious imagery than Janie's sexual awakening and coming of age. They were also inclined not to mention the grandmother or Johnny's roles in the extract. There were plenty of opportunities to score highly in AO2 through exploring the writer's depiction of the world of nature, youth, leisure and the outdoors and how this could be contrasted with the grandmother's world of the indoors, old age and work. The structure of the extract, which is perhaps more elusive than when writing about a poem, was sometimes restricted to comments on sentence and paragraph length whereas more enlightened answers could explore the effect of, for example, the rhetorical questions and Janie's changed perception of Johnny. Some rather unconvincing answers, perhaps picking up on terms such as 'revelation', focused on the passage as a religious experience rather than an erotic one.

Part of a solid response to the prose passage. Low band 3 for AO1 and top band 4 for AO2.

The author's narrative of what Janie does 'spending every minute under that blossoming tree for the last three days' instantly reveals an intense pre-occupation on behalf of the character, indicating the overwhelming connection ~~between~~ the author perceives between the blossoming of a tree <sup>or plant</sup> and the emergence of sexuality 'she had glossy leaves and bursting buds'. The contrast employed between ~~the~~ Janie and the 'sick grandma' only exacerbates this: it is instantly apparent to us why Janie's sentiment is presented so strongly to us, as the two extremes of age - and sexuality - present here indicate that this ~~is~~ seemingly boundless youth, and sexuality, every

minute' does indeed have limits which we all will reach. Indeed, the irony that the grandma is 'lying across the bed' ~~thru~~ through a 'headache', in contrast to the sexual frustration of Janie 'oh to be a pear tree <sup>with</sup> with kissing bees', who, we increasingly <sup>understand</sup> would like to be aged for more adult reasons 'Johnny Taylor, tall and lean', only serves to underline the anguish and extremely fierce sentiment of Janie.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

There is a sound response to the language of the passage. Good use of quotations supports points made. Quite a lot of ground is covered in a concise manner.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

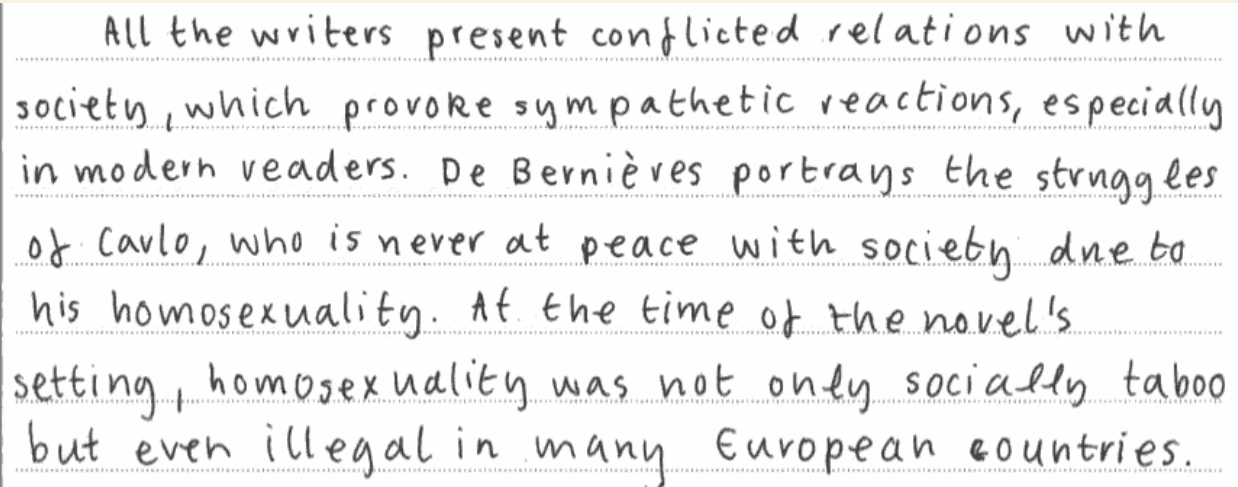
Be concise. Short quotations are useful to support a point and show your engagement with the passage.

### Question 3(a)

This section is by far the most popular of the choices available and the (a) question was the more popular option. The only text which does not have a significant following is *Emergency Kit*. All three of the novels, *Rapture* and the *Metaphysicals* are very popular with a range of different combinations. *Rapture* continues to have a wide following although it seems to be being used more selectively than in the past where candidates tend to pick out particular poems to illustrate one aspect of love or relationships to provide a link to one of the other texts. Its overall structure following the progress of a relationship in sixty two poems tended to be ignored. The structures of individual poems and the intertextual links with other writers such as Shakespeare and Browning were often dealt with quite impressively.

The (a) question by far was the most popular choice on the paper. Some candidates found 'conflict' difficult to define and explore. Others found interesting ways to deal with the many possibilities of the conflict/harmony opposition in their chosen texts. The idea of debating the terms of the proposition is often an effective way of setting up an argument, but it is not the only one. The kinds of conflicts in relationships between texts was often well established and explored, such as the links between the *Daisy*, *Tom*, and *Gatsby*, *Pelagia*, *Mandras* and *Corelli* or *Tess*, *Alec* and *Angel* triangles in their respective novels. The gender politics to be uncovered in all texts: the treatment of women in wartime *Cephalonia*, Victorian England, 1920s America or twenty first century England; attitudes towards homosexuality in the presentation of *Carlo*, the lovers in *Rapture* or attitudes towards extra marital sex in all of the texts were profitable areas for exploration. The discriminator here tended to be the amount of time spent on one particular relationship, such as that between *Mandras* and *Pelagia*, at the expense of a wider picture. Contexts are often well dealt with on these texts although we should perhaps remind readers that there would not have been any wartime readers of *Corelli* as it was written in the 1990s. When talking about attitudes to *Carlo* for example, one would have to consider what a 1940s character in the novel or in the societies being depicted might have felt. Another valid way of talking about *Carlo* might well be to deal with his inner conflict. There was often detailed knowledge of Victorian England, wartime Greece and Italy, the American Dream and the Jazz Age which when linked to specific features in the writing, depiction of character or development of plot was used most effectively. Attitudes to class, women, money and status were often profitable sources of discussion about conflict.

Part of an answer that was in the top band for each of the AOs.



All the writers present conflicted relations with society, which provoke sympathetic reactions, especially in modern readers. De Bernières portrays the struggles of Carlo, who is never at peace with society due to his homosexuality. At the time of the novel's setting, homosexuality was not only socially taboo but even illegal in many European countries.



Thus, Carlo is never openly able to admit his true nature while alive. However, De Bernières' employment of numerous first-person perspectives, a ~~common~~ feature of postmodernism, allows the reader an intimate insight into Carlo's emotions which would certainly not be available if the novel had been written at the time of its setting. De Bernières aids the development of Carlo's narrative through the use of numerals in the chapter titles-

"L'omosessuale(1)" etc. ~~Carlo~~ These passages, written in the first-person, employ a tone almost like a confession or a testimonial- "I, Carlo Piero Guercio..." It is as though Carlo recognises society's judgement on his sexuality. However, he does not internalise this judgement, demonstrated by phrases such as "I rebel against the charges of perversion". Clearly, De Bernières creates sympathy for Carlo through portrayal of his <sup>public</sup> repression of his sexuality, but private bravery in staying true to himself.

In contrast, Hardy creates sympathy for Tess through her internalisation of society's judgement. Hardy uses post-lapsarian allusions to portray her perception of herself after her affair with Alec, describing how she saw herself as a "figure of guilt" in "the haunts of innocence", not only contaminating to society, but to nature <sup>as well.</sup> itself.

However, Hardy himself, controversially for his time, does not see Tess in this way, arguing for her definition as "A Pure Woman" despite her sexuality. As Davis describes, earlier manuscript versions of 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles' portrayed Tess' rape/seduction in different ways - in one version she is given cordial from a druggist's bottle before the encounter. This would have been illegal under Victorian law and, as Davis points out, any involvement of the legal system would settle the issue of Tess' purity too easily. Thus, Hardy makes Tess' involvement with Alec more ambiguous, even hinting at her consent, when she says "my eyes were dazed by you for a while", arguing that Tess is pure despite her sexuality. This portrayal ensures that a modern reader sympathises with Tess due to her guilt for an act that she should not feel guilty for, although a Victorian reader, constrained by the societal fetters of the day, might not feel this way. Donne and Marvell take a more lighthearted approach to sex out of wedlock in 'The Flea' and 'To his Coy Mistress', ~~arguing for the~~ Their personae try to convince their lovers to have relations with them, Donne's persona arguing "How little that which thou deny'st me is", while Marvell's predicts that her "quaint honour [will turn] to dust". However, to a modern reader

these attitudes only remind one of the differing attitudes to ~~sex~~ male and female sexuality in sixteenth and seventeenth century society, creating sympathy for the anonymous lovers. Conclusively, all the writers provoke sympathetic responses from readers through portrayal of conflicted relationships with society.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This answer moves confidently between the texts being discussed. There is good use of contexts, awareness of other readers and a strong critical voice.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Try to make comparisons all through your essay.

### Question 3(b)

The much less popular (b) question prompted some effective discussion of the presentation of the extreme human experiences to be found in the texts relating to such matters as war, murder, rape, love, 'glamorous hell', 'careless rapture' relationships, grief, the persecution of homosexuals and desire. Some extremes were merely described rather than discussed or analysed. Contexts were, on the whole dealt with well in answers to this question.

## Question 4(a)

There was a wide range of answers on 4a with all three novels receiving a good deal of coverage. The terms 'sympathetic and memorable' tended to receive more attention than 'commonplace'. The poetry texts were generally less popular but there was some good work on the Wife of Bath with sound knowledge of her unreliability as an interpreter of scripture, but the less appropriate assumption that her marriages had resulted in divorce rather than sequential bereavement. Her dominant female voice was occasionally and appropriately linked to The Fat Black Woman poems. The very different kinds of language employed by Chaucer and Nichols provided knowledgeable responses for the most part. The distinction between prologue and tale in the Chaucer received some perceptive comments and analysis from a number of high band candidates.

There were some thoughtful comparisons between Pi and Pip as reliable or unreliable narrators and their differing attitudes to their environments. Pip's rejection of his family and childhood surroundings and his treatment of Joe, Biddy and Estella (and their treatment of him) were thoughtfully covered for the most part. Kate Atkinson and her unreliable narrative and post-modern style seemed to be dealt with in a more generic, less specific or analytical fashion. This text also provided plenty of evidence for 'commonplace' and the candidates apparently dealt with Bunty's 'autistic mothering' with some sympathy.

This is from a fairly low level candidate scoring in band 2 for all four AOs.

Chosen question number: Question 3(a)  Question 3(b)

Question 4(a)  Question 4(b)

Question 5(a)  Question 5(b)

Question 6(a)  Question 6(b)

In both 'Life of Pi' by Yann Martel and the poetry of Billy Collins, many characters are created. Some are memorable, some not so. The task assigned to me is to determine from whence most frequently come those of a memorable nature. Was it from ~~mundane~~ mundane situations, or extraordinary ones? Furthermore, is there a difference or a similarity in the origin of memorable characters from Yann Martel's novel and Collins' poetry? It is also my task to determine whether ~~what~~ what appears a



memorable character to one person remains it in another's approximations, with a span of time separating the two readers.

In the poem 'Bar Time' Collins creates not just one character, but a group of mysterious, innovative, and most certainly memorable drinkers, who perpetually

pass their time at the bar. The group is created by a simple 'us'. This sets the scene for the reader. What ensues ~~it~~ ensures that the group remain memorable to the reader - they are, in effect, ostracized from the rest of society. Those outside are portrayed as dark, lurking figures - those inside are portrayed as calm, gentle, content figures, with one worry but for the 'fire of a cigarette'. This separation ~~it~~ creates a unique aspect for the group to be remembered by, and they remain in the minds of the reader. Here this ~~is~~ is an example of memorable characters coming from mundane backgrounds. There is nothing special about a bar. Yet, within 13 lines, a simple concept and contrast has made the group last in the reader's mind.



In 'Life of Pi', one is more hardpressed to remember a character, remarkable, yet forged with a backdrop of normality. This alone is telling, yet this writer will persevere. It is no feat to retain Pi, Richard Parker, the Blind Frenchman, the

mercats, the orangutan, the zebra or the hyena, yet these are characters created in an insane location.

The one character that ~~truly~~ earned himself the name-tag of truly memorable was Mammaji, Pi's uncle. His devotion to swimming, his pure love of the sport, ~~is itself~~ is imprinted in the reader's mind. It is not without revisiting passages that one can remember precise details of Mammaji, yet his brilliantly Indian name and beautiful obsession, ~~his~~ his dedication to swimming in any aqueous substance he was near is left with the reader long after Mr Kumar finishes his chat with Pi about religion.



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Examiner Comments

The introduction identifies texts studied in a fairly general way. The use of rhetorical questions is not appropriate. The next two paragraphs deal with the texts in isolation.



### ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Focus precisely on the task in hand from the beginning of your essay and start comparing early on as well.

### Question 4(b)

The smaller number of answers to (b) tended to be more generic than specifically related to the terms of the question.

### Question 5(a)

Although there were not very many answers on this section what we did see offered thoughtful work on each of the three novels, with especially interesting insights and comparisons between the Caryl Phillips and Andrea Levy's novels and slightly less confident work on Chaucer where the idea of a journey seemed more elusive. One examiner who saw a range of answers on 5a commented on the ability to present a detailed argument based on the oppositions in the question, often providing a counter-argument, and showing good understanding of contextual factors. There were some useful references to the Dharker collection to support arguments but we saw no answers on Brunizem.

This answer hits the top bands for each of the four AOs, only just in band 5 for AOs 3 and 4 however.

In the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, Romesh Gunesekera's 'Reef' and Andrea Levy's 'Small Island', I would certainly argue that the journeys are as much about the psychological as the physical, and ~~perhaps~~ <sup>have</sup> even more importance to the plot when explored psychologically. In the General Prologue, for example, the actual geographical journey to Canterbury is barely mentioned, but when we consider the supposed reason for the journey - a religious pilgrimage - some of the characters undertaking the 'nage' seem to be ~~be~~ rather hypocritical to the modern reader, and certainly <sup>may have been</sup> objects of derision to the 14<sup>th</sup> Century audience. In 'Reef', the journey to England from the narrator's native Sri Lanka is far less important than how Tinton came to make this move, from being a simple 'kolla' ('house-boy') to a restaurateur. The reader in 'Small Island' witnesses the hopes of Jamaicans Hortense and Gilbert being

dashed before and after their journey to England; implying that it is the contrast of expectations and reality is painful to read but provides the interest in the novel but - as Jamaica is described as a 'small Island', perhaps they would have suffered from this even had they chosen to travel elsewhere than the 'Mother Country'.

Something all the texts have in common is that they are set against a backdrop of social change-

Critic Loy D. Martin says that Chaucer describes the "anxiety" of late fourteenth-century society moving from ~~the~~ traditional social ranks to materialistic, economically-motivated classes", which we see characterised in several unsavoury ~~the~~ pilgrims: the Reeve, who "konde better than his lord purchase.

Full riche he was assured pryvely."

The continued references to money suggest a society obsessed with its acquisition, and the Reeve is just one example; others include the Pardoner, who makes money off gullible and poor people by selling them false relics - for example the 'pilwe-beer' ('pillow-case') which he insists is 'Oure lady veyl', and the ~~the~~ Sergeant of the Lawe, to whom <sup>Al</sup> ~~the~~ was fee simple'. For modern readers, ~~the~~ Chaucer's General Prologue is an introduction to Medieval English society, and transports the reader back in time. Some critics feel that Chaucer represents the whole of society through his pilgrims, but S. S. Hussey does not believe it is complete: 'those of the highest rank (above the knight)



would be unlikely to go on a public pilgrimage; equally, the very poor would be unable to go.' In ~~this sense~~ <sup>other words</sup>, the physical journey Chaucer describes should not suffice as an accurate historical document for modern readers. Helen Corsa agrees: 'The General Prologue refers to types, rather than specific individuals. ... The friar and the Monk exemplify all, not just some, of the vices associated

with their respective careers.' Nevertheless, I believe that the breadth and variety of pilgrims Chaucer describes ~~was~~ is entertaining to the modern reader, and although we cannot <sup>be</sup> sure how the Canterbury Tales were received by contemporary critics, no doubt some would have enjoyed the range from the knight to the lowly rascals ~~and~~ and thieves - among which Chaucer humorously includes himself. S.S. Hussey points out. All readers, contemporary and modern, experience a metaphorical journey through a changing society, which is more psychological than physical.

'Keef' is set during the build-up to the civil war in Sri Lanka and therefore Western modern readers, just as in The General Prologue, are transported to a fast-disappearing paradise with enticing exotic descriptions such as 'the lapping of the dark water, flapping lotus leaves, the warm air rippling over it and the cormorants rising, the silent glide of the hornbill.' Interestingly this is a memory within a memory - Triton remembering how, at Salgado's, he missed the proximity of the reservoir near his childhood home. The journey the reader experience

is Triton's memory to go back in time in Triton's memory:  
what is the novel is set out <sup>in</sup> with England at the  
beginning and the end with the flashbacks of Sri  
Lanka in the middle. A Marxist critic might argue that  
England <sup>is</sup> important to Triton because it is there that

he finally gains independence, while another could argue  
that ~~he~~ actually he sacrifices an awful lot to gain this -  
he discovers himself 'without a past, without a name,  
without Ranjan Salgado standing by my side'. Also,  
he would not have <sup>been</sup> able to go to England had he not  
~~been~~ been such a faithful servant to Salgado, nor would  
there have been reason to go had it not been for the  
looming civil war and rising violence. Therefore the  
geographical journey is only significant in that it marks  
the transition from kolla to a snack-shop owner, but  
even this is gradual. As Sharon Barker says, 'Reef' is a  
novel about "memory and imagination", and I believe  
that Western readers <sup>will</sup> enjoy reading of Triton's 'emotional'  
journey <sup>through</sup> from adolescence: his education and  
unrequited admiration and love for Salgado's love,  
Miss Niti.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The introduction suggests a candidate with good textual knowledge who is making a clear attempt to engage with the terms of the question. There is some detailed reference to other readers, in this case named critics. There is a clear contextual awareness. There are some interesting comparisons.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

A good introduction will show focus on the topic and suggests ways in which the essay might be going.



## Question 5(b)

There were not enough answers seen on this option to enable examiners to make any specific comments.

## Question 6(a)

The (a) question was the less popular option here although there was much fierce debate about whether it was necessary to have experienced war to write convincingly about it with appropriate illustration from the poetry selections. Although quite a lot of candidates only wrote about novels, most did write about both genres and made interesting comparisons and contrasts. Each of the novels could be used to illustrate the opposite point of view and there was much discussion on how the distance of time and detachment from the events being depicted was by no means a handicap to writing about the war. Hosseini's own biographical details were often used to deal with his own relationship to the situations that he depicts in his novel.

A danger, not always avoided, was to recount plot details, especially that of *The Kite Runner*, but all three novels were well contextualised.

This essay was awarded top marks in all four AOs.

Chosen question number: Question 3(a)  Question 3(b)   
Question 4(a)  Question 4(b)   
Question 5(a)  Question 5(b)   
Question 6(a)  Question 6(b)

~~Literature written about war continues to be~~

The literature written by poets who fought in the Great War, the Second World War and other conflicts continues to be moving, poignant and relevant to the world today, with poets such as Wilfred Owen ~~are~~ still celebrated for the works they created. However, poetry and prose written by non-combatants such as Vera Brittain, or modern-day authors including Pat Barker and Michael Frayn, are also necessary in order to explore the impact of conflict on all areas of aspects of humanity, particularly in an age when veterans of the First World War are no longer alive.

A particularly important role of modern literature is to explore elements of the war that would have been taboo had they been written at the time. Pat Barker, the author of 'The Ghost Road', evidently did not fight in the First World War, yet by using graphic, ~~orgasmic~~ multi-sensory imagery she is able to ~~to~~ humanize historical figures such as Wilfred Owen and deconstruct their mythologized public image. Barker uses the fictional protagonist Billy Prior in order to ~~to~~ explore sexuality and human relationships without explicitly applying

these ideas to genuine ~~to~~ ~~figures~~ people. During an encounter with a prostitute, Prior reflects, 'Dotted here and there on the sheet were tiny coils of pubic hair. He wondered whose spunk he was lying in, whether he knew him, how carefully she'd washed afterwards! The use of modern slang, such as 'spunk' ~~is not the~~ ~~pub~~ encourages the reader to view those ~~of~~ who fought in the war ~~in a~~ ~~through a~~ ~~differe~~ from a different perspective, while the ~~the~~ gruesome tricolon deliberately creates a sense of discomfort. ~~and~~ By viewing the war from an outsider's perspective, Barker is able to explore the lives of soldiers in a way that is perhaps more accessible to a modern reader, with no experience of fighting on the front line, than the poetry written by the soldiers themselves.

...

There is frequent evidence in Pat Barker's writing of the influence of war poets like Owen. In a particularly gruesome passage, Prior describes finding 'a gob of Hallet's brain on ~~my fingertips~~ between my finger-tips', an image that echoes Isaac Rosenberg's poem 'Dead Man's Dump', which ~~also~~ describes 'A man's brain splattered on / A stretcher bearer's face'. ~~But~~ This use of visceral imagery to illustrate the horrors of war is one that, while skillfully employed by Barker, ~~is~~ began with poets who experienced ~~the~~ firsthand the events they describe in their writing.

A further instance in which ~~the~~ the writing ~~of~~ of those who fought in the war is more influential than that of non-combatants is in the changing of public perception. Many war poets, including Robert Graves, Rupert Brooke and Siegfried Sassoon came from public school backgrounds in which, according to the critic Adrien Caeser 'masculinity was defined by the ability to endure and inflict pain', and the idea of ~~die~~ dying for one's country was ~~viewed~~ as glorious and glorified in war propaganda. ~~Both Sassoon and Owen wrote~~ Before the war, both Owen and Sassoon wrote poetry that was heavily influenced by Romantic poets such as

Keats, ~~and~~ and entered the war with a great sense of optimism ~~the~~ which altered almost immediately upon experiencing the reality of fighting on the front. In Robert Graves' ~~a memoir~~ memoir, 'Goodbye to All That', he describes reading Sassoon's pre-war poetry and reflecting that 'Sassoon had not yet been in the trenches (...) he would soon change his style'. Indeed,

much of ~~the poetry~~ the poetry Sassoon wrote after ~~experiencing~~ having fought on the front line ~~and~~ directly addresses ~~the~~ what he referred to in his 'Soldier's Declaration' as 'the callous complacency ~~of which~~ ~~is~~ with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share. In his poem 'Suicide in the Trenches', Sassoon describes 'smug-faced crowds with kindling eye / Who cheer when soldier lads march by', creating a sense of bitterness and anger that is absent from the work of Barker, Millay, Frayn and all those who did not directly experience the war. 'Suicide in the Trenches' uses an iambic rhythm and perfect rhyme scheme; a restrictive, classical ~~for~~ form that echoes the outdated way in which war was ~~port~~ depicted to the general public. This ~~anger~~ + anger is also explored by ~~the~~ Owen in 'Dulce et Decorum Est', one of his most famous works, in which he describes hearing 'at every jolt, the blood / Come gurgling from the froth-corrupted lungs', again using visceral, graphic imagery in order to challenge the public view of the war. The use of the Latin title is perhaps a reference to the public school ~~school~~ men that, in Owen's view, were

responsible for the war; ~~in~~ ~~the~~ the use of a 'dead' language ~~implies~~ implies that the idea that it is at all 'sweet' to die for one's country is no longer relevant. The fact that Owen wrote from direct experience means that his ~~poetry~~ writing is in many ways more moving than that of those who, ~~in~~ whilst they may have experienced grievous losses, did not directly experience the ~~gross~~ gruesome events described



in poems like 'Dulce et Decorum Est'. The use of the guttural 'gargling' emphasizes Owen's rage, whilst 'froth-corrupted' echoes the loss of innocence described by poets such as Millay.



### ResultsPlus

#### Examiner Comments

This is most impressive in its confident and detailed engagement with the texts under discussion. There are some detailed references to texts that are not in the specification but which are used validly to develop ideas and make connections.



### ResultsPlus

#### Examiner Tip

Knowledge, supported by extensive wider reading, will be rewarded if it supports the argument and relates to the main texts being studied.

## Question 6(b)

The (b) question did provoke specific attention to language and structure quite explicitly. Examiners felt that candidates did particularly well in making comparisons between texts in this unit and the contexts were also addressed with considerable confidence. Although one examiner drew attention to the impressive range of knowledge displayed, despite the tendency to focus on 'horror and suffering', another felt that high band candidates were dealing effectively with 'humane and sensitive' and challenged the proposition in speaking of the atrocities and horrors carried out in war's name. Lower band answers tended to focus on the descriptive. Nobody seems to have studied the David Harsent collection and several examiners commented on the comparatively limited number of poems from the anthologies that were dealt with.

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