

GCE English Literature

Exemplar responses

Unit 4 – 6ET04

An exploration of how the past in a 'Streetcar Named Desire' and 'Rebecca' affects the character's present lives.

Both 'A Streetcar Named Desire' by Tennessee Williams and 'Rebecca' by Daphne du Maurier rely on the past, to create the present situations that the characters find themselves in. In 'A Streetcar Named Desire', William's surrounds Blanche with lurking memories of the past causing her mental state to decay. In some ways Blanche still lives in the past and holds onto what she had when she was younger; beauty, purity and love, till this progresses to obsession. Her past becomes a way of retreating from the harsh reality that she finds herself in. Conversely in 'Rebecca', Mr de Winter refuses to open his past life to his new wife, causing problems within their marriage. For 'Rebecca', the past is directly the result of the characters conflict. The character Rebecca resembles what Manderley once was, and is an obstacle that the new Mrs de Winter has to overcome - including Mrs Danvers who cannot let go of the memory of Rebecca.

From the beginning of the play the audience is made aware that Blanche is troubled; not only by the setting of her sister's house, but due to where she has come from - affecting her behaviour. *'She pours half a tumbler of whiskey and tosses it down'*. The stage directions reveal that Blanche is using alcohol as a means of coping with the reality she finds herself in. The verb *'tosses'*, assumes that Blanche is trying to get rid of her nervous disposition frantically, to dull her emotions. Her alcoholism foreshadows that she will try to block her tragic past experiences, and indicates that her fragile state will dissolve into madness. For Blanche her past is ambiguous as in some ways her past self is what makes her want to escape from reality and what she has become. *'She is daintily dressed in a white suit...'* Her being dressed in white is symbolic of purity and innocence, revealing that she purposefully dresses like the person that she was once. However at the same time her past provides her with dark and haunting memories that bring her to her present mental state, which is introduced to be weak by the reliance of alcohol. The audience at the time would see Blanche as no more than an overly emotional woman, at first not realising that what she has been through has mentally disturbed her. Harold Clurman argues that *"... the audience identifies itself with Stanley...his low jeering is seconded by the audience's laughter, which seems to mock the feeble and hysterical decorativeness of the girl's (Blanche's) behaviour"*. I agree with Clurman, as the audience at the time, would not be able to relate to someone of Blanche's hysteric nature, favouring the seemingly sane Stanley. Similarly Du Maurier foreshadows in the narrator's reverie, in 'Rebecca', that Maxim has a troubled and complex past, as his behaviour dramatically changes when something triggers an unpleasant memory. *'...he himself was so lost in the labyrinth of his own unquiet thoughts...for a wild moment the idea came to me that perhaps he was...not altogether sane.'* Like the audience in 'A Streetcar Named Desire', the reader can realise that the past has affected Maxim's present mental state at that time. The noun *'labyrinth'* emphasises the intricacy of his disturbing past, which lures him from the present, revealing his sanity to be questionable.

Word count: 554

Evaluate
influence
on audiences.

Elements
of language
analysed
critically.

Appropriate
selection of
different
interpretations
used to
develop line
of argument.

When Blanche's past increasingly affects her mental state, she cannot cope any longer with the past, or come to terms with the present. Her obsession for purity and beauty is a direct link with her past and the person she used to be - an innocent and wealthy 'Southern Belle'.¹ From a Freudian perspective Blanche's actions are symptoms of obsessional neurosis, which is a form of "psychoneurosis". Blanche's obsessional bathing routine and terror to bright light is compulsive behaviour; as she has obsessional thoughts that are repetitive and abnormal. "...I take hot baths for nerves. Hydro-therapy, they call it...of course you don't know what anxiety feels like!" Blanche calls her over regular bath taking the noun 'Hydro-therapy', which makes the audience realise that she may have had past treatment and that she is aware of her mental state. Bathing is also symbolic of cleansing sins which is a direct link to the 'sins' in her past; such as prostitution and her self-blame of Allen's death. Mary Ann Corrigan states "*The ritual cleansing which takes place in the tub restores Blanche to a state of former innocence. Once again she is young and pure in a beautiful word.*" This is true as Blanche admits that bathing gives her "...a brand new outlook on life" which for a short time alleviates her from anxiety and haunting past. This stresses her desperate attempt to undo her past and the audience is made fully aware of this. In the context mental asylums would perform lobotomies as a solution to mental illness. Williams' sister was lobotomized, which closely relates to Blanche being escorted to a mental asylum. The modern audience would have a better understanding of mental illness, as in modern society there are many mental health services that provide emotional support, such as therapy. Mental illness is no longer a stigma in society, as it was in the context of the play.

Literary
of this novel
to this novel
Perspective of
argument.

Symbols of
the interrelations
of Allen's.

Consideration
of impact on
audience over
time.

Critical
point

Elia Kazan argues that "...Blanche's memories, inner life, emotions, are a real factor. We cannot really understand her behaviour unless we see the effect of her past on her present behaviour". I agree as William's use of sound and theatrical devices present Blanche's distorted view, visually and audibly. The audience witnesses Blanche's past come alive on stage with the use of the 'Varsouviana' eerily playing in times of distress, which further supports her lack of sanity. *'The "Varsouviana" is filtered into weird distortion, accompanied by the cries and noises of the jungle.'* As Blanche crumbles into madness it is her past that captures her sanity. The polka tune occurs when Blanche feels distressed or anxious, which is purely reminiscent of her emotions on the night of Allen's death. The verb 'cries' and the noun 'noises' combined make Blanche's delusion animalistic and presents her as the prey. The past has become her enemy and she cannot win. The context of play meant that mental illness was not a well-informed topic with the audience at the time. However the use of theatrical devices enables the audience to see the distorted reality of those who suffer from psychological issues, as her madness comes alive on stage.

Language
analysed
critically

Du Maurier also presents Mrs Danvers to have an obsession, which is to keep Rebecca's memory alive. Mrs Danvers actions develop into a final breakdown, in which Manderley

¹ A short account of Obsessional Neurosis in Freud and Lacan by Hara Pepeli

perishes. Similar to Blanche Mrs Danvers resides in the past, "You come here and think you can take Mrs de Winter's place. You. You take my lady's place." The triadic structure of the pronoun 'you' makes Mrs Danvers insults to Mrs de Winter more scathing, and emphasises her hatred of Rebecca's replacement. The single pronoun 'You.' followed by caesura increases the strength of Mrs Danvers accusatory tone. The personal pronoun 'my' connotes Mrs Danvers is possessive of Rebecca. Mrs Danvers acts as the antagonist, combined with Rebecca who is the ghost that will never be forgotten. Due to Mrs Danvers constant reminders of the deceased Rebecca, the unnerving Mrs Danvers would entertain readers at the time and today. Du Maurier reveals the full extent of Mrs Danvers fixation with Rebecca when she finds Mrs de Winter in Rebecca's bedroom, "Here is her nightdress inside the case. You've been touching it haven't you? ... Put it against your face. It's soft isn't it? You can feel it can't you? The scent is still fresh, isn't it? ..." The repetitions of the questions Mrs Danvers poses are erratic and excitable, which extends beyond the normal grief pattern. The questioning is rhetorical, as Mrs Danvers does not wait for answers, dismissing Maxim's new wife entirely. There is Freudian subtext, in Mrs Danvers actions towards the death of Rebecca. ²Tammy Clewell explains Freud's 'Mourning theory'; which reveals that some people can go beyond the melancholia of a bereavement and progress into "...hyper remembering, a process of obsessive recollection during which the survivor resuscitates the existence of the lost other in the space of the psyche, replacing an actual absence with an imaginary presence." I support this statement; Mrs Danvers has a distorted view of reality in which she chooses to remain in the past, fuelling her hatred for the present.

Connotation + comparisons between texts.

Language + structure analysis.

Critical theory explored.

In the same way in 'A Streetcar Named Desire', the death of Allen is the cause of Blanche's obsessive and nervous character. It is a significant and traumatic event that is most haunting to Blanche. Williams purposefully reveals that Allen's suicide is the event in Blanche's past that triggers her anxiety and erratic state. Her guilt has become almost impossible to contain, "It was because - on the dance-floor - unable to stop myself - I'd suddenly said - "I know! I know! You disgust me." The use of parenthesis reveals that Blanche still struggles to come to terms with Allen's death, preventing her from telling the story without heavy emotion. The verb 'disgust' signifies Blanche's perception of homosexuality. The society at the time would echo Blanche's feelings of 'disgust' of Allen's sexuality, as homosexuality was still a social taboo and illegal in America. Whereas in today's society homosexuality is legal, therefore the audience today would not likely condone Blanche's actions toward her gay husband. As Williams' own personal past is intertwined in the topic of homosexuality; possibly his main purpose to create the death of Allen, was to show how homophobia can inflict great pain. Corrigan argues, "Blanche's lot was Belle Reve, with its debts and deaths, and a homosexual husband who killed himself because, for once, her sensitivity failed her." In my opinion Blanche was never sensitive to others. In the context of the time, Blanche's wealthy

Language analysis.

Midwesterns reaching over time.

Links to author's own context.

Critical opinions explored.

² <http://www.apsa.org/portals/1/docs/japa/521/clewell.pdf> Tammy Clewell - Mourning beyond Melancholia: Freud's Psychoanalysis of Loss

Word count: 541

aristocratic family assured her that she was able to get whatever she wished. However Allen's sexuality was out of her control and she reacted out of hurt, the guilt of this past event disturbs Blanche.

The emotions that Blanche feels towards this event in her life show that she has been affected ever since and is deluded by guilt. ³In Freud's use of psychoanalysis he found that "*When anxiety occurs, the mind first responds by an increase in problem-solving thinking, seeking rational ways of escaping the situation...distort, transform, or otherwise falsify reality.*" In my opinion this could be true as the death of Allen causes great anxiety in Blanche's present life. Freudian subtext of 'regression' is evident in Blanche, which is when the patient acts in a childlike manner as a defence mechanism from anxiety. Williams reveals that Blanche was fired from the teaching profession, because she had relations with a male student. "*Young man! Young, young, young, young – man! Has anyone ever told you that you look like a young prince out of the Arabian Nights?*" The repetition of the adjective 'young' reveals Blanche is infatuated with youth and her diction becomes very childlike, when speaking to the young man. She calls him a 'young prince', which again is similar to an infatuated young girl who wishes to fall in love with a prince. This reveals that Blanche's past has affected her perception of reality and her obsessions cause her to react childlike in some situations. In the context of the time paedophilia would receive a strongly negative reaction, as it would in today's society. Both societies consider the act immoral, which reveals that both audiences would be shocked at Blanche's actions. Corrigan reveals that, "*The illusion sustaining her is the image of herself as a Southern belle, a fine, cultured young lady. The reality is a lonely woman, desperately seeking human contact...*" In agreement with Corrigan, Blanche will seek human contact in anyway possible, whether in the form of a young boy, through Mitch or even through prostituting herself. Her pursuit to remain a 'Southern belle' is one of the reasons for her deluded present state.

Oppositely in 'Rebecca', Maxim's guilt for murdering Rebecca is lessened by his paranoia of Rebecca still being present in his life even though she is dead. "*...Her damned shadow keeping us from one another...I remembered her eyes as she looked at me before she died...she knew she would win in the end.*" The adjective 'damned' has double entendre, as it not only an exclamation of anger, but is also symbolic of Rebecca's eternal punishment in hell, as a result of her morality. Like Blanche's farce of a 'Southern Belle', Maxim's marriage with Rebecca was on the surface happy, but in reality the marriage was a farce. In the context of the time love was not a necessary component for marriage, particularly in upper class families and would consider divorce to be a scandal. In a modern context divorce is socially acceptable and a social norm, therefore readers today would recognise that Maxim's false marriage would not be worth family pride. It could be argued that Rebecca's murder was inevitable, as the pressure of the pretence would have become a great burden to

³ http://changingminds.org/explanations/behaviors/coping/defense_mechanisms.htm Word count: 540

Connects + comparisons.

Critical perspective used to develop line of argument.

Language analysed critically.

Consideration of society's needs.

Critical opinions.

Language analysis.

Modern audience considered.

Maxim's life. "Our marriage was a farce...she was vicious, damnable, rotten...Rebecca was incapable of love...she was not even normal." The adjectives, 'vicious' and 'rotten' reveal that there was no emotion in their abnormal marriage. This revelation that Maxim's first wife was awful, allows Mrs de Winter to recognise that Maxim's past was unbearable, not because he loved Rebecca, but because she was wicked. His choice to carry on his marriage with Rebecca is the result of his present state, paranoid and on the verge of being caught for his actions.

Language analysis.

Furthermore Sally Beauman argues "Rebecca is dead when the novel commences...yet she burns the imagination. Vengeful, rebellious, indestructible and superb, she rises from the dead to avenge herself... is ...dangerous - and she haunts the reader long after the last page is turned." I agree with Beauman, the force of Rebecca remains long after her death; Maxim feels her haunting presence, which affects his relationship with his new wife. Maxim's marriage to the new Mrs de Winter is an escape from his miserable former life, especially as the unnamed narrator is the complete opposite to Rebecca. Maxim admires Mrs de Winter for her youth and innocence, "Promise me you will never wear black satin", he tells Mrs de Winter. Satin is symbolic of a sultry and womanly material, something which the young Mrs de Winter is not. Maxim is referring to the women's fashion of the 1920s, which was more provocative and symbolic of Rebecca's character. Whereas in the 1930s, the era in which Mrs de Winter represents, women began to dress more conservatively and Maxim is aware of this difference. Mrs de Winter's character differs from Rebecca completely, which is why Maxim chooses to marry her, in order to have no likeness of his past in his present. "All memories are bitter, and I prefer to ignore them...and I want to forget every phase in my existence up until that time...I must begin living all over again." The use of the adjective 'bitter' is what Maxim feels over his marriage with Rebecca; his bitterness caused him to kill her. The verbs 'ignore' and 'forget', emphasise his strong determination of forgetting his past. Maxim's choice to marry the young and lower middle class Mrs de Winter, would have been questioned in the context of the time, as in the 1930s, class was still a barrier between societies. Therefore readers at the time would have been surprised at Maxim's decision to marry his young bride.

Critical opinions explored.

Contextual factors explored + analysed.

Language analysis.

Contrastingly Blanche's final attempt for a relationship with Mitch is destroyed by her delusions of the past self she tries to recreate, whereas Maxim's new marriage allows him to escape from Rebecca. "Mitch! - Y'know, I really shouldn't let you in...so utterly uncavalier! But, hello beautiful!" Blanche maintains her act of a sophisticated woman, in order to secure Mitch. This is her downfall as the fear of aging and loneliness stops Blanche from having a genuine relationship. The adjective 'uncavalier' reveals that she is ironically complaining of Mitch's propriety, when she was formerly a prostitute. The use of the exclamation marks reveals Blanche's erratic state. By lying about herself she loses Mitch, who could have saved her from her present state. When Stanley reveals Blanche's past to Mitch, he acts a force of reality on Blanche; Corrigan states, "Being forced to face the kind of reality that she refuses to recognize as significant is the cause of Blanche's breakdown". I agree that this is true of

Comparisons between texts.

Language analysed with depth.

Blanche. Her obsessive neurotic behaviour and reliance on alcohol as previously stated, forebodes her final breakdown.

The exploration above concludes that the past for the character Blanche in 'A Streetcar Named Desire' has had the most damaging affect on her present life. The psychological impact from her past actions, particularly her self-blame for Allen's death has severed all forms of normality from Blanche. Williams presents her past as a prevention of Blanche ever having a normal life. In 'Realism and Theatricalism in A Streetcar Named Desire', Corrigan's final argument is "...Williams achieves his most successful revelation of human nature in its totality in this play in which distorts the realistic surface as little as possible and only when necessary." In agreement the audience witnesses Blanche's hell in her mind, through the use of theatrical devices. This provides evidence of her past having the most significant affect on her. In 'Rebecca', the death of Rebecca does not silence the force of her amongst the living. Maxim's past brings nothing but misery and regret. His attempt to relive his life by marrying someone who is a direct contrast to his first wife, results in the death of Manderley. For Mrs Danvers her past gives her purpose in her present life, as Rebecca's memory ignites her hatred for the new Mrs de Winter. Du Maurier purposefully leaves the narrator unnamed, which reveals how the past of Manderley, overtakes her position as Maxim's wife. Ultimately the past is revealed to have an overwhelmingly negative affect on the character's present lives.

Connect
between
facts

Critical
analysis
of
the
text
in
developing
argument

Word Count: 256

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- **Rebecca TV series** (1997) Directed by Jim O'Brien. ITV Studios Home Entertainment
- **A Streetcar Named Desire** (1951) Directed by Elia Kazan. The Distributors Warner Bros.

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- <http://www.biography.com/people/tennessee-williams-9532952>
- <http://www.dumaurier.org/>
- <http://www.ivcc.edu/uploadedFiles/faculty/mangold/Carl%20Jung%20-%20Analytic%20Psychology.pdf>
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- <http://homepages.rpi.edu/~verwyc/defmech.htm>
- http://changingminds.org/explanations/behaviors/coping/defense_mechanisms.htm
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Overall mark for folder: 71

An exploration of how far characters may be said to have free will in the texts studied.

In Tennessee Williams's 'A Streetcar Named Desire', Blanche is psychologically damaged by what she experienced at Belle Reve and it is this that controls how she is and how she approaches situations; therefore she lacks free will. She tells Stella in Scene I, "I, I, I took the blows in my face and my body!" The repetition of the pronoun 'I' with graphology used in the last tells us that she alone suffered both physically and mentally from the horrors she witnessed. The repetition and graphology of the verb 'saw' also contributes to this. All audiences over time would be shocked at Blanche's outburst, with modern audiences sympathising more. In the 1940s, a woman behaving in the way that Blanche is would have been thought of as mad. Although this may be true, the views and consequences of this kind of hysteria were much uninformed and severe than the views and actions that we take today. Women like Blanche would have been imprisoned in an asylum, whereas today we focus more on helping mentally ill people. Due to society's lack of knowledge, audiences of the time would have believed that sending Blanche to an asylum was the right course of action as they thought that mental illnesses were incurable. The repercussions that Blanche faces have a dramatic effect on her free will. Blanche is haunted by what happened, it has taken over the wheel of her life and is driving her recklessly to a destination only the audience can envision. Mary Ann Corrigan quotes Elia Kazan in her critical essay 'Realism and Theatricalism in A Streetcar Named Desire': "we cannot really understand her behaviour unless we see the effect of her past on her present behaviour." This agrees with my belief that Blanche's past has had a profound effect on her behaviour and mentality and it is that which controls her. Kazan acknowledges that Blanche's behaviour is the result of events that have happened in her past, events that stem from the fall of Belle Reve. This quote implies and supports the idea that it is certain events that have a psychological impact on the mind, and determine the way a person will behave. Due to the numerous amounts of tragic circumstances Blanche has found herself in, it is fair to say that she is hopelessly doomed. No matter how hard she tries, she will never be able to create her own path in life.

Similarly, in Sylvia Plath's 'The Bell Jar', it is Esther's experiences that have shaped her attitudes and reactions to situations she finds herself in. Her discovery of Buddy's affair, "now I saw he had only been pretending all this time to be so innocent", affects the way she values her virginity. She acknowledges this change in thinking, with the metaphor, "After that something in me just froze up." The sentence is short, isolated and very matter-of-fact. It is like there was a switch in Esther that has been flipped, steering her into a completely different direction to the one she was previously following. She explains in Chapter Seven that "ever since Buddy Willard... I had been thinking I ought to go out and sleep with somebody myself." This is rather ironic, as Esther is obsessed with the concept of purity and desperately wants to be pure, yet society of the time in which the novel is set viewed sex before marriage as impure and

Language critically analysed.

Considers audiences over time.

Critical opinions explored + evaluated.

Connections between texts made.

Analysis of quotes.

sinful. As a result of these views, readers of the time may have been dismayed at Esther's attitude towards her virginity. Virginity has connotations of innocence and purity, so it seems strange that Esther would sacrifice the very thing she wants to be. It could, however, be that Esther is deliberately wanting to rebel against society's views on the importance of a female's virginity – it is acceptable for men to have sex outside of marriage, so it should be fine for women too. Much like Stanley drove Blanche into the sordid act of having sex with him, Buddy has driven Esther into believing she should have sex herself, the only difference being Stanley physically forced the situation onto Blanche whereas Buddy mentally and emotionally influenced Esther.

Analysis of contextual factors.

It can be seen here just how much society controls people's lives. Men in both eras were the dominant sex, with their views and treatment of women casting a shadow over how women wished to be like: free. As they would have been living in this context, audiences and readers of these eras may not have understood how outrageous women's lack of control was. Audiences and readers nowadays would be appalled by the constraints as we belong to a much more feminist society. I agree with Robert Scholes who identifies the importance of the 'Amazon', commenting, "[Plath] is announcing a major theme in her work, the hostility between men and women." Plath, through Esther, fights for women's freedom, partly by calling the same sex hotel that Esther is staying in the 'Amazon'. The noun 'Amazon' has the definition 'a member of a legendary race of female warriors'. Esther sees herself as one of these warriors, with the fight being for freedom. Esther views men as weapons of destruction, shown through Marco, who carries a "silver" lighter in the shape of a "bullet", and Doctor Gordon, whose pen is described as a "silver bullet". Both of these men harm her, with Marco attempting to rape her and with Doctor Gordon giving her that traumatic shock treatment. Bullets kill, and it is significant that they are described with the adjective "silver", for in folklore silver bullets are said to kill monsters, and that is exactly how Esther views herself: a monster.

Audiences over time evaluated into line of argument.

Critical opinion analysed.

Language analysed critically.

Esther displays this warrior nature further on in the novel by fighting back when Marco attempts to rape her. She describes the situation with the noun 'battle', with the verbs 'bite', 'gouged' and 'smashed' following. These verbs are very aggressive, ones we would usually associate with a man. Esther behaving in this way shows that she has the same capabilities of men, of fighting back and fending for herself. Correspondingly, Blanche suggests that she is capable of being a predator by saying, "That's where I brought my victims", the verb 'brought' and noun 'victims' showing that she is in control. The noun 'victims' demonstrates this control the most, as victims are helpless; someone has power over them. Esther shows that she does have some free will, as she could have easily let Marco do what he wanted to do as well as losing her virginity: "If I just lie here and do nothing it will happen." Esther presents herself with choices, unlike Blanche, who, after a feeble attempt of fighting off Stanley, gives in. Esther daring to fight back may have shocked readers of the time, as men viewed women as weak and defenceless. Plath is using Esther to challenge

Contextual comparisons made.

Audiences considered.

Word count: 575

not just the fictional men in the novel, but also the men in the real world. The idea that Esther is a warrior is enforced even more by the "two strokes" of Marco's blood that has been "stained" on her cheeks. She does not feel like 'washing off... the dried blood', and says, "I thought I would carry them around with me". Some warriors wear face paint, and Esther is wearing hers around like a medal. She calls it "spectacular", this adjective telling us that she is proud of it. For Esther, it could symbolise her winning against a man.

Language analysis

On the other hand, Williams's Blanche does not show this same fight for freedom. Blanche surrenders to Stanley in Scene X, as she 'sinks' to her knees, her figure 'inert'. The verb 'sinks' creates an image of Blanche bowing to Stanley, practically giving him permission to do as he pleases, and the adjective 'inert' tells us that she has given up the will and the strength to fight him off. Society's constraints on women have different effects on the free will of each character. It would seem that society is too powerful for Blanche; free will for women is non-existent and so there is no use trying to gain it, whereas Plath's Esther is motivated by society to fight. Audiences and readers in the modern day would find Esther's fight admirable and worth respecting, whilst they would find Blanche's efforts weak and pathetic. Blanche lets herself be treated like an animal, and some would regard animals with having little to no free will as they are driven solely by their instincts.

Connections/Comparisons made between texts.

Audiences over time considered.

Blanche uses bathing as an attempt to purify herself, to make herself innocent once again. Innocence in a woman was incredibly important in the 1940s, a quality desired by men, causing original audiences to be disgusted by Blanche, seeing her as little more than a sex object. She cannot control what she has done and who she was in the past, and so attempts to control who she is in the present and future by trying to make herself reborn from bathing, similar to a baptism. Due to this, I believe Corrigan is right in saying "her bathing is an escape mechanism. The ritual cleansing... restores Blanche to a state of former innocence." Blanche uses water to cleanse herself of dirt, which is the people she has been with and the things she has done. She is trapped by her past, and her mental state is trapping whatever sanity she may have left, but these attempts of escaping do not work as she always ends back in the bath again, evident that the previous escape attempt failed. Blanche is very similar to Esther in this sense, as Esther also takes baths in order to be 'pure again' and to cleanse herself of people and places she feels has contaminated her: 'Doreen is dissolving, Frankie is dissolving... the dirt that settled on my skin... is turning into something pure'. The repetition of the verb 'dissolving' demonstrates just how much of a hold the concept of purity has on her; it has bewitched her. Both characters take baths after a distressing event, or when they feel they are at their lowest. At the end of Scene I, Blanche reveals to Stanley, 'the boy died', the 'boy' being her husband. In the opening of Scene II, we are told 'Blanche is bathing.' The shortness of this alliterative sentence tells us that this is a regular occurrence and nothing out of the ordinary for Blanche, as she experiences many troublesome situations and therefore takes a lot of baths. Esther reveals to the reader that 'whenever I'm sad I'm going to

Critical opinions explored.

Language analysis in close detail.

die, or so nervous I can't sleep... I say 'I'll go take a hot bath.'" She adds to the idea that these baths are like a baptism by comparing it to "holy water". Esther shows that she, like Blanche, feels reborn after a bath by using the simile, "I felt pure and sweet as a new baby." This behaviour may not be regarded as particularly odd in these original contexts as religion was an important aspect of life, so it would seem only natural that their actions would be influenced by religion.

Contextual factor considered.

Esther's craving for purity is not only shown by bathing, but by the excessive use of the adjective 'white' throughout the entire novel: "white tooth-paste-ad smile", "white hair", "white cocoon". It is omnipresent; she sees it in everything and in everyone. Esther spotting white in other people may suggest that no matter what impure actions they have done, their minds are pure in comparison to hers. It may also be symbolic of her desire to start a new life; white is clean, and Esther desires a clean slate. Readers across all times will be able to relate to this want of a new life, as everybody has done or felt something they regret, wanting a second chance. It could also, however, represent her craving for death; the white light that is claimed we go into when we die, or corpses, which are pale and bloodless. Esther's need for purity is partly what drives her to her attempted suicide.

Language explained in analytical detail.

Whilst Blanche is afraid of showing who she really is, Esther is brave in revealing her feelings. She challenges society's norms by admitting to Buddy, "I'm never going to get married." Buddy responds with, "you're crazy". Marking Esther with the noun 'crazy' reflects how readers of the time would have reacted, as it was an unwritten rule that a woman's purpose was to marry and have children. Buddy is rather patronising by saying, "you'll change your mind". Luke Ferretter comments in his feminist essay, "Scully and Bart found a tendency in gynecology textbooks to define pregnancy as a "step towards maturity" in women, and to castigate in psychiatric terms women who refused this traditional role as expressing "unconscious anxiety, conflict or inadequacy"". Scully and Bart's findings are, I believe, very true in highlighting the unfair stereotypes that women are placed in by people like Buddy, with society attempting to keep them under control and forcing them into these roles by claiming that there must be something psychologically wrong with them if they do not. However, Esther is firm with her decision, saying, "No. My mind's made up." Whereas Blanche's fear of people's opinions controls her, Esther displays free will by not hiding who she wants to be. The way that women were treated at this time would have meant that readers would have probably been indifferent to Esther's treatment. Conversely, modern readers would not be so accepting of it, due to the rise in feminism.

Critical opinions investigated thoroughly.

Connections between texts.

This idea that Blanche is easy prey to society is supported by Corrigan, who, agreeing with my argument that Blanche lacks free will, states, "Blanche is both a representative and a victim of tradition". Here, Corrigan quite rightly labels Blanche a 'victim'; she is a victim of a society, of a tradition that pushed her into believing that "attractiveness, virtue and gentility led automatically to happiness". Both audiences

Critical opinions employed.

Word count: 563

of the time and of the twenty-first Century may not be shocked by these attitudes, as it was the norm at the time and they are still held by many people today, particularly the importance of attractiveness. Although Blanche did not truly behave in a virtuous and genteel way, suggesting that perhaps she does possess some element of free will, her society ingrained in her mind that happiness is determined by acting in opposing ways as to what she did. Blanche rebelled against society and is now torturing herself, by attempting to shape herself into a new person that can be accepted. Society is controlling Blanche by making her believe that she is a dreadful sinner and that one should only behave in a certain way. Blanche has to lie in order to conform to society's standards, and it is these lies that largely cause her descent into madness. Audiences of the 1940s would have had little compassion for Blanche as they were living by these standards and would have expected everyone else to live by them too.

Contextual factors analysed.

Audiences over time evaluated.

The use of foreshadowing in both texts implies that the characters' futures are determined and so they therefore lack free will. In 'Streetcar', Stanley says to Blanche, "we've had this date with each other from the beginning!" The noun 'beginning' suggests that there is nothing that Blanche could have done between the start of the play and Scene X; the 'rape' was inevitable. Stanley's language creates the idea of destiny, which implies that Blanche has no free will. I support Corrigan, who explains, "Blanche's involuntary journey to the depths of sordidness results in her losing contact completely with any kind of reality." Corrigan uses the adjective 'involuntary' to describe Blanche and Stanley's sexual encounter. From this, it is clear that Stanley forced her into the situation. She did not have sex with him out of her own accord. Therefore, it can be said that it is Stanley who gave her that final push into complete and utter madness; Blanche's future has been decided by Stanley, not herself. Stanley's treatment of Blanche reflects exactly how women in the 1940s were treated. They were seen as second-class citizens, resulting in them having limited free will, if any. As a result of this, male audiences of the 1940s would possibly have supported Stanley's behaviour towards Blanche.

Language explored.

Critical theory opinion.

Esther's future is foreshadowed in the opening chapter of the novel, "the summer they electrocuted the Rosenbergs". She says, ironically, "it had nothing to do with me, but I couldn't help wondering what it would be like, being burned alive all along your nerves." It is almost as though Esther tempted fate, as we find out later on that being electrocuted has everything to do with her. Her shock treatments are foreshadowed elsewhere in the novel by the repetition of the adjective 'electric': "I could feel the little electric filaments clinging to my hot cheeks" and "a little electric shock flared through me." This is foreshadowing, as electroconvulsive therapy is the inducement of seizures by electricity, and so the repeated use of the adjective 'electric' alludes to the fact that Esther will receive this treatment. A flare is used as a distress signal, so the use of this noun is a way of warning us of what is to come. Her first shock treatment is arguably the final thing that pushes her over the edge. Readers nowadays are likely to be sympathetic towards Esther. In today's society, mental illnesses such as depression are discussed much more openly than they were

Language analysis.

Audience reactions over time.

in the time the novel was set, with a greater understanding of them and how to treat them. Identically to how they would view Blanche, readers at the time in which the novel was released would probably view Esther as simply being crazy, with the best thing being to keep her locked up in an asylum. Esther obsesses over the Rosenbergs' death, and she perhaps relates to Mrs Rosenberg, for it took more than one shock for her to die. Esther has a connection with her, for she too needed more than one electric shock, but for her, the result was feeling alive again.

*connections
and
comparisons*

Both 'Streetcar's' Blanche and 'The Bell Jar's' Esther demonstrate a lack of free will. However, whilst Blanche seems to be completely and utterly controlled by her mental illness, society and Stanley, Esther appears to have more flexibility – she is not afraid to step out of the shadow that is cast upon women by men, to defy society's standards and to fight for herself. Therefore, Esther has free will to some extent.

Word Count: 3,090

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Overall marks for folder: 71

How Far Does The Recollection of Past Events and Experiences
Effect the Opinions and Actions of The Characters in A Streetcar
Named Desire and Rain Man?

'Rain Man' and 'A Streetcar Named Desire' are both greatly affected by previous situations. However, the types of the situations present in both texts differ greatly. The only notable similarity is that 'the past', centres around a death and how this event affects and/or influences individual characters, which sometimes creates a domino effect. The past is also an essential part of the compositions due to the way that a characters recollection and perception of an event can alter the route that the story takes.

For example, Charlie's recollection of Rain Man, in collaboration with his realisation of who Raymond (a.k.a Ray) really is, 'you you're the Rain Man', completely alters his attitude. Furthermore, Charlie's perception of Raymond changes completely from annoyance to acceptance. This is clearly evident through use of the pronoun 'you', creating a very direct and personal connection between them and reinforcing the importance of the revelation. It not only changes Charlie's perception, but it also seems to completely alter his motivation from money to love.

This knowledge would also change the view of both original and modern audiences, as Fleischer has already ensured there is a level of rapport between them and the fictitious being of Rain Man, one of Charlie's imaginary friends. This empathetic bond is then transferred to Raymond following the realisation that he and Rain Man are one in the same.

This transformation also results in a reformation of Charlie's tone of voice as he refrains from using scathing, disdainful language in favour of a calmer and more understanding manner, 'come on Ray it's 11 O'clock lights out'. The use of the unambiguous description, seen in the detailed phrase '11 o'clock', is extremely important in showing how much Charlie has changed by the way that he chooses to relay information which when Raymond first told him he forcefully dismissed. Such an alteration culminates in the moving scene in the meeting room in which Raymond and Charlie share a few touching moments. Another example of an attitude change appears in response to the forceful manner and repetitively vigorous actions of Dr Marston. Such deeds seemed to bring out a new side of Charlie that can only be described as innate brotherly affection, 'You don't want anymore questions do you..... there won't be anymore questions I'll make sure of that.....I like having you as my big brother'.

391 WORDS

The authoritative language that Fleischer chooses to use through imperative terms such as 'won't' and absolutes, as evidenced by the phrase 'I'll make sure of that', is also highly important in re-emphasising how protective Charlie has become towards Raymond as a result of the road-trip.

Similarly, Stella's memory of Blanche, during their time at Belle Reve, greatly affects her acceptance level of Blanche's antics and overall behaviour. This recollection also has a reasonable amount of bearing on how Stella acts towards Blanche. There are examples throughout the text where Stella is seemingly 'mollycoddling' Blanche, 'I haven't said anything yet I am waiting until she gets in a quieter condition', as she complies with her every wish 'submissively' and without question. Another reason behind this hesitant language could be that of sisterly self-preservation as Stella tries to delay the inevitable, admitting Blanche into a mental institute. This is also seen through the use of such negatively connotative adverbs e.g. 'submissively'. Furthermore, Stella at times seems to try to protect Blanche with a mother-like ferocity, as she attempts to maintain Blanche's non-existent innocence, 'don't mention the baby....you come out with me while Blanche is getting dressed'. The dominant, forceful nature of Stella's language seen in the use of the word 'don't' and the inclusion of the direct pronoun 'you', is at complete odds with her general demeanour, highlighting how emotionally driven she becomes with anything concerning Blanche.

Another example is when Stella tries to hide her upset following her discussion with Stanley concerning Blanche's previous indiscretions, 'Matter? Why?... I guess I'm a little tired'. The incoherent nature of this statement, apparent through the repeated use of the rhetorical questions 'matter...why?', and **Stella's clear hesitation as seen through the use of the ellipsis '.....', is also prevalent as it not only allows Stella to deflect Blanche's question, but also shows how well Stella knows Blanche. By using small and submissive sentences, Stella knows Blanche's interest will not last and that very soon Blanche will reclaim her position as the centre of attention and overtly insist on everyone's full and undivided attention.** Critic, Mary Ann Corrigan reinforces this point when she comments extremely aptly that Blanche's 'view of the world' is both 'limited and distorted'.

By altering the submissive tone that the audience has become used to, Williams creates an interesting point of conflict. Stella is viewed in a completely different light, as the audience is shown a glimpse of courage, in the way that she converses with Stanley. This change, unfortunately, is only momentary as Stanley retaliates by saying 'now since when are you giving me orders.....you bet your life I'm going to stay here'.

462 WORDS

The vigorous language which is clearly evident through the direct nature of the phrase 'you bet your life' reaffirms Stanley's role as the dominating alpha male. This evident patriarchal relationship may create some issues for modern audiences, as in 21st Century marriages there is an expected state of equality between husband and wife, which is clearly not present in the Kowalski marriage.

audience

In the 'shrink hearing' to discuss Raymond's future, the dismissive and colloquial language used by Charlie through the use of the noun 'shrink' really highlights how little he cared, both for the medical institution and the psychiatrist's important suggestion that would impact both his and Raymond's lives. In spite of this, Raymond's recollection of the adventures he shared with his brother, including 'danced with Charlie Babbit', seems to have had an almost profound emotional effect on Charlie.

language

Furthermore, despite his apparent naivety and what could be seen as childlike obliviousness, Raymond makes a hugely important differentiation by simply referring to his brother by his full name. This direct address shows, however covertly, how much Raymond cares for Charlie and how proud he was to have the opportunity to dance with him. In terms of dialogue, there are very few situations in which someone will call another by their full name.

This fact becomes evident when the 'Yuppie' Charlie defends Raymond from the Psychiatrist's persistent questioning about what Raymond would prefer to do, 'stay with your brother or go back to Wallbrook'. In the early eighties when Rain Man was first published, this decision would have been extremely easy for many people. There was still a large amount of negative stigma surrounding those who suffered from mental illness and psychological conditions such as autism. Even 21st Century audiences may try to disconnect themselves from Raymond's predicament. Despite increased awareness, the topic of mental illness is still looked upon negatively by a large proportion of modern society.

Contextual factors

Different audiences

Despite the fact that it seems that the doctor is giving Raymond a clear choice, both his tone and the repetition of and the weight attributed to the phrase 'go back to Wallbrook' shows how he is manipulating the situation and his language to achieve his desired result. In an effort to save Raymond from any further distress Charlie intervenes stating that doctor has 'made his point' and there was 'no need to humiliate him'. The successfulness of the doctor's manipulation is clearly shown through the defiant and vigorous language associated with the verbs 'made' and 'humiliate'.

language

413 WORDS

Although, this decision is an exceedingly key scene in the text Charlie's act of sending Raymond away is not the only example in Rain Man of someone being sent away. Through Raymond's recollection of past events the audience (and Charlie) discover 'that's why they put you away they thought you hurt me'. This breakthrough has a major effect on Charlie's attitude. The power surrounding the sense of relief correlating to the use of the contraction 'that's' really highlights to the audience how heavily the question regarding why Raymond had been sent away was weighing on Charlie's mind and how relieved he was having finally uncovered the truth. *language*

The memory of the past week's antics also plays a role in another emotionally fuelled scene. Charlie utilises his brother's amazing gift for numbers to ensure he knows that he is going to come and visit him 'very soon'. The indefinite form of language in the phrase 'very soon' connects to Charlie's awareness that Raymond is able to calculate information he is given into exact details, as shown in the quote '14 days, 336 hours, 20160 minutes and 1,209,600 seconds', Charlie wants to ensure that Ray doesn't feel let down, as he has done in the past, if for some reason Charlie is unable to meet Ray at the specified time. This act is also a sign of the level of self realisation that has occurred for Charlie, making him aware of how unreliable he and his past actions have been.

A similar concept applies to Stella's reaction to the loss of her sister, as Stella also experiences a wealth of emotion in correspondence with Blanche's departure. The only obvious difference is that unlike Charlie, Stella chooses not to change her actions as she allows Stanley 'fingers to find the opening of her blouse'. By allowing this action to take place she ensures the continuation of the same patriarchal regime that was present in the Kowalski household prior to Blanche's visit. Furthermore, the use of the verb 'find' creates a direct parallel between Stella and an inanimate item as Williams reinforces the fact that to Stanley, Stella is nothing more than a possession. *language*

Susanna's lack of knowledge in relation to Ray and her subsequent attitude towards him is also an interesting point of comparison. Susanna seems to take everything in her stride, whereas Stanley, in relation to Blanche, seems to base his entire attitude on the overriding feeling of disdain.

As the characters spend time with their relevant counterparts, the experiences they share seem to reinforce their opinions. Susanna kisses Raymond in the elevator 'moving closer.... took his hands in hers...they started to dance' while on the other hand Stanley *decides* to rape Blanche 'Come to think of it maybe you wouldn't be bad to interfere with'.

The indirect language of 'maybe' and the chosen form of a rhetorical question creates an interesting 'juxtaposition'. In relation to not only the context in which it is used, but also the type of language, it is at complete odds with both Stanley's tone and his actions which follow this comment. In comparison the words 'interfere with' do, to some extent, counterbalance the negative connotations of the opinion present in the statement. I agree with Corrigan however, when she insinuates an aspect of inevitability of some form of conflict in terms of the rape by using completely opposing descriptions for Blanche, the 'last remnant of a moribund culture', and Stanley, 'the vanguard of a vital and different society'. The blatant foreboding is present not only through the use of conflicting types of description but also through the way that she chooses to use terms such as 'moribund' and 'vanguard'. Both hold connotations of war and confrontation. However, I sincerely disagree with Corrigan, when despite what I see as despicable actions, she still states that Stanley 'bears a remarkable resemblance to the kind of hero that Americans love'. I do understand, however, that this 21st Century perspective is at complete odds with that of the original audience who would have seen Stanley as 'the hero' rather than someone to be hated.

Language.

Critic.

Response to critic's opinions.

Modest Perspective

Initially Leonore Fleischer presents the nurse as being a simpleton. Her complete ignorance of Raymond's condition results in her mislabelling him as being 'artistic'. This inaccuracy is followed by her informing Charlie that she's 'not familiar with that' and asking him 'what is the exact problem?'. Although incorrect, the inclusion by Fleischer of the adjective 'artistic' links directly with comment made by the town doctor concerning whether Raymond had any 'special abilities'.

language.

I feel that the use of such positive if somewhat misplaced descriptions are great aids to the audience, helping them to look on Raymond's disability with a more positive perspective, rather than the usual negativity that is associated with mental disorders due to societal stigma and stereotypes.

Despite this lack of knowledge and in the face of Charlie's disdain at the fact that he has 'just gotta deal with' Raymond, the doctor seems to revel in the idea that he finally has the opportunity to experience the true extent of Raymond's 'Special abilities'.

441 WORDS

The use of the verb 'deal' creates the suggestion that Raymond is not a person but simply a problem that needs to be eradicated. This concept is completely contradicted through the positive connotations attached to the adjective 'special' as it generates the idea that Raymond is not an issue to deal with but someone who is an extremely extraordinary, significant individual.

Language.

The doctor's subsequent reaction after discovering that the answer Raymond gives him to extremely complicated sums (e.g. '4343 times 1234... 5359262') is correct does, however, produce some level of constrained awe from Charlie as he comments that Raymond is 'a genius'. This complete change does not last long, however, as after making this announcement and reinforcing the point that 'he should work for NASA or something' he recants this point after realising that Raymond had no awareness of the value of money 'so much for the NASA idea'. Despite the seemingly positive attitude through the repeated use of the noun 'genius', Charlie's thinly veiled scepticism is evidenced in his tone and the satirical manner attached to the comment 'or something'. The lack of any real emotion and the dismissive tone of Charlie when he says 'so much for', really highlights to the audience just how fickle and malleable Charlie's opinion of his brother is.

This scene is also extremely relevant as it shows how an individual's actions and opinions can change as certain events develop, thus resulting in more knowledge being gained. In terms of audience reaction, I feel that the reference to 'NASA' would really show just how impressive Raymond's abilities are as both the original and modern audience hold some level of awe for such a groundbreaking organisation. If anything, I believe that the original audience would be affected more so as the concept of space travel was still very much in its infancy and as such it was surrounded by a certain amount of novelty, whereas for the modern day audience the aspect of novelty has very much worn off as we seem to take the opportunity for space travel for granted and prefer instead to focus on ethical and philosophical effects of the discoveries that they make.

audience perception.

An example of a criticism, which could be raised in relation to this question, centres on Raymond's abilities. In particular it surrounds the definition of an Autistic Savant: 'a person with serious mental disability including autistic disorder who demonstrates profound and prodigious abilities and capabilities in excess of what can be considered normal' *WIKI. In response to this, *Psychiatrist Donald Treffert* stated one key characteristic, which all savants have, is a 'prodigious' memory, which he described as very 'deep'. This in turn can be used as part of the argument that Raymond's condition has no significant bearing on his memories with the detrimental side effects of his condition, focusing more on his actions and emotional responses.

476 WORDS

One response to this critic focuses on Raymond's tendency to over react, which some individuals claim could possibly result in him distorting reality. One example of this is seen in the way that Ray becomes extremely excitable as a result of Charlie simply turning on the bath tap. Raymond's response to this is nothing short of physically volatile as he repeatedly hits himself and shrieks incoherently, in spite of Charlie's best efforts to reassure him that he 'is not burnt'.

The viability of Ray's memories is clearly shown in the way that he is able to recall the interior of the car with pin point detail, 'the seats were brown leather....1949 Buick roadmaster. Straight eight Fireball eight only 8,095 production models made'. The specific detail and adjectives used in this description are in complete contradiction to the surrounding scene, as it is in a sense, the only piece of clarity in a situation that is shrouded in mystery and intrigue. In a way, it could be argued that the sureness and confidence behind the language that Raymond chooses to use, especially the verb 'were', when he relays to Susanna and Charlie that he knows that the seats have changed colour to a 'pitiful red', is Raymond's way of telling his brother who he is.

Contextually, there is not much difference in the way that either the modern or the original audience would have viewed either text. Both texts include topics, which are and/or can be viewed by both audiences as socially inappropriate (e.g. homosexuality, rape, mental illness). For the most part, with the exception of rape and homosexuality, the opinions surrounding the remaining topics would not have changed extensively.

In terms of the concept of memory and recollection, given the 'throw-away' nature of the 21st Century audience I feel that the original audience would have been more aware and, as such, more affected by the use of memory and the subsequent effects on the individual's actions and opinions.

This is mainly due to the 21st Century audience's expectation of instant results, which in terms of the texts would mean that they are less likely to spend time analysing scenes to find the inclusion of past events, as well as the general importance of the memories, which are referred to in the text.

To conclude, recollection of past events and experiences in both texts affect the opinions and actions of the characters. In my opinion I feel that this has been achieved with varying levels of effectiveness. However I also feel that the domino effect created using a variety of recollections from internal reflections to more external examples is extremely intriguing.

Overall mark for folder: 37

“An idea or thought that continually preoccupies or intrudes on a person’s mind”

Explore the ways in which the authors you have studied have presented obsession and to what extent the obsession matches this definition of it.

The theme of obsession is a dominating component of Ian McEwan’s “**Enduring Love**” and is expressed to the reader in many diverse forms and with varying techniques. William Boyd’s “**Brazzaville Beach**” and Emily Bronte’s “**Wuthering Heights**” also have an element of obsession interlaced through them, though in different levels of importance. Each of these authors, particularly Ian McEwan and William Boyd, demonstrate clear and unhealthy obsessions that objectify and direct the characters in the novels on their journey through the narrative. *Sand Hook*

Fundamentally, characters are the most obvious technique to examine obsession that is proffered in “**Enduring Love**” to the reader. Ian McEwan unveils the character of Jed Parry in chapter one, sneakily, amidst the terror and confusion of McEwan’s dramatic and suspenseful description of a ballooning accident. The accident takes precedent at the launch of the plot and is a vital section of the narrative that, as a reader, we see the repercussions from throughout the novel. Jed Parry’s obsession is one of the most prominent repercussions of the event. The readers see it grow and develop from the first meeting and experience, along with our narrator Joe Rose, it evolve in to something alarming and threatening. Jed’s obsession is written to not only centre on Joe’s character but also to interlink Joe with Jed’s previous obsession – religion. Similar to this combination of obsessions, Heathcliff has an equal set of desires fused within his character in Emily Bronte’s “**Wuthering Heights**”. One of these passions is aimed towards the individual Catherine and the other towards revenge. These two fascinations are both distinct, yet related as joined they make up a part of Heathcliff’s personality. Catherine becomes the essence of Heathcliff’s life, much as Joe Rose is to Jed Parry. This is shown by Parry’s letter in “**Enduring Love**”, “*I stand before you naked, defenceless, dependant on your mercy, begging your forgiveness*”.¹ *As structure.* *Like A03* *is.*

Jed Parry is the source of obsession in “**Enduring Love**” from which the other characters obsessions stem or make themselves known because of. An example would be Joe Rose. Due to Jed’s adulation, Joe becomes engrossed and captivated by Jed’s fascination; this is Joe’s own obsessive nature emerging and as a result of this the readers start to notice other fixations in his nature that McEwan has cleverly put in to the novel, for example, his work for science. This is shown during the section of text that comes from Joe as being Clarissa’s point of view “*he walks behind her, and follows her in, telling her over and over in different ways that he has to get*” *Focus.*

¹ Enduring Love, by Ian McEwan

back into science". This transference of obsession is also seen in William Boyd's "**Brazzaville Beach**". One case of this is John Clearwater. William Boyd wrote him with such a fanatical nature that he gave him over excitable reactions to success, and therefore a mass downward spiral to his failures. John's moods and frenzied focus on his work creates a cause for Hope's character development. This introduces her own addictive personality, "She would watch John in secret, covertly, over a weekend to see what happened".² The emergence of Hope Clearwater's obsessive side only grows in the narrative and insures that she, in time, becomes the core source of obsession within the narrative of "**Brazzaville Beach**" as around her the people at Grosso Arvore, Usman and Amilcar all present their own obsessions as a result of her fixations being on display. Almost as if by consequence they show their own fascinations. Hope's obsession with her research leads her to desert her relationship with her husband and evade her life for months at a time; causing many problems to permeate underneath the surface of her character. "She felt somewhat guilty about this because, all things considered, the weekend had been quite a success." The disagreement that transpires between Hope and Mallabar about the chimpanzees leaves the character of Mallabar obsessive to a point in which witnessing the change in the chimps jolts Mallabar into a crazed and animalistic person, "No, no. He's obviously gone mad, or something". This is one of the more obvious effects of Hope's obsessive quality coming through the narrative. By seeing the obsessive side to Hope's character, the reader becomes aware of the side to Mallabar and his research on the lives of the chimps.

The chimps themselves reflect their own tale of obsession. They are their own depiction of the Trojan War and the fight for Helen's beauty. "The war. The Chimpanzee wars they're calling them. The northern chimps - they've been systematically killing the southerners." This obsession is integrated into the novel and coexists with all the other back stories and character obsessions within it, however, are overlooked to a big extent.

In "**Enduring Love**" - though there is no account with hidden meaning in the narrative, the obsession does not end with the leading male characters. The less noticeable character of Clarissa also has the obsessive side penned into her personality and temperament. Not only do her fixations surround her work on Keats but also she is heavily obsessed by the idea of children and her incapability to have any of her own, "what was revealed was Clarissa's own mourning for a phantom child, willed in to half-living by frustrated love". This character's obsessive side is less intrusive on the narrative in the novel because it is less influential on the structure of the story and is better explained as a simple character trait. In "**Brazzaville Beach**" the obsessive behaviour of John Clearwater is less important in the novel's plotline, just as Clarissa's is in "**Enduring Love**" - though is ever much more noticeable. John is fanatical about his work and about proving his worth; ignoring his relationship, family responsibilities and escaping social attachments, "And how he wanted it! How he longed for his name to merit a separate entry in

² Brazzaville Beach, by William Boyd

dictionaries of mathematics." This is another example of how his ideas persistently disturb John's thoughts and this is one way in which William Boyd, like Ian McEwan, controls his characters, leading them by their obsessions and manias.

Another technique that McEwan utilises is the use of appendices. The most important of which would be the first appendix, found at the end of the book. This is research of an actual clinical syndrome intertwined with the story that has unfolded in the novel. This clever juxtaposition of truth and fantasy is an interesting take on modern authors but shows the theme of obsession clearly. The character is described in this appendix as having "a homo-erotic obsession, with religious overtones: a clinical variant of de Clerambault's syndrome". Adding an actual, real syndrome is an intuitive way of including obsession in to the storyline. An actual sufferer of this condition, possibly the most famous, was a 53 year old lady from France that was convinced the pattern in which king George V opened and shut his curtains was a sure sign that he was in love with her.³ This is shadowed in the plot of "**Enduring Love**" when Parry reads messages that Joe has sent him through the raindrops in the hedges and also from the change in the curtains of Joe Rose's apartment. The detail that McEwan has included; the source of obsession being a sufferer of an actual, palpable syndrome makes the novel that much more heightened in its obsession and it shows that the author, McEwan, has included many different ways of presenting the obsession with in his writing. Additionally, McEwan includes language methods in the novel. As a part of the de Clerambault's syndrome, and also as part of the story, Jed Parry's character sees messages without any language passing between the characters. This is a new insight in to the idea of using language to show what the author is hinting at, and so, McEwan has done the same thing but by using the lack of language to present the problem, "You say that, and then you make that face. What is it you really want me to do?" This shows that much of Jed's reasoning's are from his interpretations of Joe's face; making the outcome of any meeting between the two uncontrollable.

Using articles and appendices as McEwan does is not an uncommon thing in novels, this is shown in "**Brazzaville Beach**" when there are articles scattered throughout the novel to give certain insights in to different aspects of the narrator's life, "*the theory behind electro-convulsive therapy is that psychopathic behaviour is caused by aberrant brain pattern.*" This shows things that happen to other characters and explains in better detail what the processes are and how they work. A technique like this takes a great deal of research but often makes the story work a lot better, and makes the theme of obsession more relevant and clear. Both Ian McEwan in "**Enduring Love**" and William Boyd in "**Brazzaville Beach**" have done extra research to portray the characters and their individual obsessions and it makes the levels of obsession show in such a strong and sharply focused way.

Ian McEwan expresses obsession through writing techniques. Not only with the appendices but also with letters. The prime example of this in

³<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Cs2whGXTWeYC&pg=PA165#v=onepage&q&f=false>

"**Enduring Love**" is the chapters in which Jed Parry's character sends letters to the character Joe Rose, "*Show me your fury or bitterness. I don't mind. I'll never desert you.*" This puts across the embodiment of his obsession, showing how far his character would go to secure a relationship with the person in which his infatuation is directed towards. Ian McEwan has included techniques in his language to portray this as well. This includes use of repetition, "*Joe, Joe, Joe... I'll confess it, I covered five sheets of paper with your name.*" The effect of this is that it gives his character both a more childish quality and a fanatical reverence simultaneously. The image of writing his name over and over highlights the childish curve to his personality and infuses within his character a rooted core of obsession that the reader can determine easily. This is also portrayed in Emily Bronte's "**Wuthering Heights**" during the third chapter, "*This writing, however, was nothing but a name repeated in all kinds of characters, large and small - Catherine Earnshaw, here and there varied to Catherine Heathcliff, and then again to Catherine Linton.*"⁴ This, just as with "**Enduring Love**", shows the youthful side to the characters obsession, although Emily Bronte writes more of a diary entry as opposed to the use of letters. The language difference between these two sentences is a reflection on the ear in which they were written. As "**Enduring Love**" is a modern text, the language is furthered and mirrors the world of today, whereas "**Wuthering Heights**", being a Victorian novel, uses the vernacular that was appropriate during that time.

As2 / feeling
As2.
Good point
As3 / clear link
Needs dis.

The character of John Clearwater writes a letter to Hope in "**Brazzaville Beach**" - showing the same style that Ian McEwan employs in "**Enduring Love**". "*And I see now - or at least the docs are helping me to see - that the problem with me over the last few months is that I've been screened from my work.*" This highlights his characters view on his work, giving a new perspective to the readers outlook of his fixation. This injection of a different writing technique is well expressed and inserts an opinion of another character into the plotline. The repetitiveness of John Clearwater, among other characters, helps us to see the obsession woven into the narrative of the novel.

The theme of obsession is intertwined so greatly with the narrative of Ian McEwan's "**Enduring Love**", William Boyd's "**Brazzaville Beach**" and Emily Bronte's "**Wuthering Heights**". The authors present the different variations of obsession in many different ways; through characters, the language used, the narrative tools and the change in narrators. These are all great ways of injecting obsession in to the story line and provoking ideas in the characters that create a certain level of fixation.

Some understanding of the texts and links between them. Some points make a NAV technique and structure but little on language. Some useful contextual points but little evidence of other viewpoints

⁴ Wuthering Heights, by Emily Bronte

Bibliography

- 1 - Enduring Love, by Ian McEwan
- 2 - Brazzaville Beach, by William Boyd
- 3 - <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Cs2whGXTWeYC&pg=PA165#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- 4 - Wuthering Heights, by Emily Bronte

Overall mark for folder: 37