

Answer ONE question on the texts you have studied. Begin your answer on page 5.

Childhood

Texts

Pre-1900: *What Maisie Knew*, Henry James; *Hard Times*, Charles Dickens

Post-1900: *Atonement*, Ian McEwan; *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker

EITHER

- 1 Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts portray characters responding to difficult circumstances. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 1 = 40 marks)

OR

- 2 Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts present friendship. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 2 = 40 marks)

Colonisation and its Aftermath

Texts

Pre-1900: *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad; *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain

Post-1900: *A Passage to India*, E M Forster; *The Lonely Londoners*, Sam Selvon

EITHER

- 3 Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts present exploitation. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 3 = 40 marks)

OR

- 4 Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts portray characters responding to unfamiliar environments. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 4 = 40 marks)



Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number: Question 1 ☒ Question 2 ☒ Question 3 ☒
Question 4 ☒ Question 5 ☒ Question 6 ☒
Question 7 ☒ Question 8 ☒ Question 9 ☒
Question 10 ☒ Question 11 ☒ Question 12 ☒

Please write the titles of your chosen texts below:

Text 1:

Hard Times

Text 2:

The Color Purple

The Opening to both books is somewhat unsettling and portrays quite a bleak and lonely world. The Color Purple's opening is particularly shocking because of the use of sexual language such as 'titties' and 'pussy' used by the fourteen-year-old protagonist in conjunction with juvenile vocabulary such as 'Mammy' and 'thing'. In her use of this abrupt opening and its shocking language Walker presents a lonely world for this child and conveys how her innocence and childhood is stolen from her by this abuse. This lonely world



devoid of ~~friend~~ friendship or happiness is arguably comparable to the opening of 'Hard Times' by Charles Dickens in that it introduces characters in situation without friendship ~~or~~ in order to create a development throughout the novel. The abrupt opening of the book is immediately recognisable as being in opposition to any idea of friendship, sun or childhood. Dickens uses ~~repetition~~ repetition of the word 'Facts' to emphasize ~~the~~ ~~this~~ ~~image~~ how ~~the~~ ~~contrast~~ contrasted Mr. Gradgrind's philosophy is to the nature of children alongside the almost biblical reference to sowing with the line 'Plant nothing else and root out everything else' and indeed the titles of the three books (Reaping, sowing and Garnering). This approach to education does not allow for any form of friendship or imagination due to its methodical, fact-based nature ~~is~~; a product of the industrial revolution which Dickens was criticising.



Both novels also contain a key friendship that is instrumental for the development of a key character. In the Color Purple this character is Shug Avery who not only ~~introduce~~ awakens Celie sexually but also empowers her to leave Albert and introduces her to ~~gay~~ God. In one letter, addressed to God, Celie recounts Shug telling her about 'a little burton that gits real hot when you do you know what with somebody' this awakens Celie sexually, teaches her to enjoy sex and helps her to discover she is Homosexual. In this way Shug can be considered an instrumental character and the catalyst for Celie's self discovery as well as being extremely important for the surrthering of the plot as she helps Celie to leave Albert.

In Hard Times the equivalent character is Sissy Jupe, a girl in complete opposition to Gradgrind she represents



Dickens' own views of creativity, imagination and childlike wonder. In chapter # two Gradgrind embarrasses Sissy by saying 'girl number twenty unable to define a horse' while Dickens describes her (through the use of the omnipotent narrator) as ~~gaining~~ gaining a 'deeper and more lustrous colour from the Sun' while Bitzer in contrast is said to look as if he 'would bleed white'. This early description of Sissy cements her in our mind as a favourable character so that we understand her value as a friend to Louisa later in the book.

Sissy seems to have an effect on Louisa to the point where she is 'looking at the girl' wondering and imagining. Something Tom doesn't understand as he says 'you seem to find more in it than I ever do'. Perhaps it is Sissy's influence on Louisa through their friendship which prevents her from turning into the manipulative, immoral character that we see Tom become towards the



end of the novel when he robs the bank. It is also of note that despite Tom thinking 'she hates me' of Sissy, it is actually her and the circus people who help Tom and bring about Gradgrind's realisation towards the end of the novel. In this way Sissy is used similarly to Shug in the Color Purple as she is used not only as a catalyst for Louisa's self discovery but also as a catalyst for the general plot of the novel. The only way that I would argue Celie and Shug's friendship and its use by Walker differs from the use of Sissy is that Sissy is representative of an entire life philosophy used by ~~the~~ Dickens to contrast ~~the~~ Gradgrind. Sissy and her circus 'family' make the climax of the play possible with the ~~or~~ bitter irony of Gradgrind sitting 'on the clown's performing chair in the middle of the room'



In conclusion I would argue that both novels present a bleak world in their opening which seems incongruent with the children that are the focus of both books. However, the beacon of friendship from a wildly different character is present in both books and while teaching a character about self discovery advances the plot of the novel. However I would say that in the Color Purple Shugs influence is more impactful on the final outcome of the novel as there is a sort of happy ending for Celie. However in Hard Times the ending is quite bleak which could mean Sissy's friendship did not affect the plot as much. It is however interesting to see a friendship used to represent two opposing ideologies and I would say this is the main function of friendship in Hard Times.

