

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

Crime and Detection

Texts

Pre-1900: *Lady Audley's Secret*, Mary Elizabeth Braddon; *The Moonstone*, Wilkie Collins

Post-1900: *In Cold Blood*, Truman Capote; *The Murder Room*, P D James

EITHER

- 5** Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts depict characters who investigate crime. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 5 = 40 marks)

OR

- 6** Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts create a sense of mystery for the reader. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 6 = 40 marks)

Science and Society

Texts

Pre-1900: *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley; *The War of the Worlds*, H G Wells

Post-1900: *Never Let Me Go*, Kazuo Ishiguro; *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood

EITHER

- 7** Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts explore the importance of hope. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 7 = 40 marks)

OR

- 8** Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts criticise human behaviour. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 8 = 40 marks)



P 4 8 6 7 2 A 0 3 1 6

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The Supernatural

Texts

Pre-1900: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde; *Dracula*, Bram Stoker

Post-1900: *The Little Stranger*, Sarah Waters; *Beloved*, Toni Morrison

EITHER

- 9** Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts present characters who experience anxiety. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 9 = 40 marks)

OR

- 10** Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts examine violence. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 10 = 40 marks)

Women and Society

Texts

Pre-1900: *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë; *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Thomas Hardy

Post-1900: *Mrs Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf; *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini

EITHER

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

(Total for Question 11 = 40 marks)

OR

- 12** Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen texts present women's attempts to find happiness. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 12 = 40 marks)



Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. 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:

FRANKENSTEIN BY MARY SHELLEY

Text 2:

THE HANDMAID'S TALE BY MARGARET ATWOOD

In both Shelley and Atwood's fictional dystopian societies, the importance of human behaviour and its implications/ramifications are shown in a number of ways. Both writers go to great lengths to not only comment on the impact of human activity and behaviour, but expand on the possibilities of what current activities could possibly mean in the short term future, and to an extent criticise the societies and practices human endeavour relative to the times in which each respective novel is set.

When dealing with Shelley's 'Frankenstein', it is crucial that we garner a deep understanding of the contextual influences imposed upon Mary Shelley at the time the text was written. It is widely known that her husband



Percy ~~B. Shelley~~ Shelley and Lord Byron were around her at the time 'Frankenstein' was conceptualised, but not so often mentioned in the duplicitous and intense upbringing Shelley was given by her parents; both individuals to whom rightly here their own places within the academic literary canon.

Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin passed onto Shelley deep rooted philosophical ideas from imminent theorists such as Kant, Rousseau and Locke about education and what forms the human behavioural psyche. In this respect, it is entirely appropriate to make comment on Shelley's choice of disrupting the natural order of societal upbringing in quite literally taking the 'tabula rasa' theory and molding it into her narrative through the actual creation of life from relative periodical scientific ventures, namely galvanism.

Atwood too gives credence to societal movements of the time in which she writes, most notably in relation to movements during the 1980s on restricting abortion rights (ie as was implemented in Romania). 'The Handmaid's Tale' is, in contrast to Shelley's more ^{perhaps} ambiguous nature, a sharp social satire of present ~~regimes~~ political regimes, and Atwood does not, in my opinion, mince her words as she expresses her criticism of the treatment of women by



society, especially under Reagan's presidency.

Not only in scientific terms, Atwood, in ~~her~~ setting her text in a totalitarian bureaucratic regime, is able to intermingle disturbing aspects of religion with scientific developments as justification for the ~~the~~ relaxation of reproductive rights. She goes into great detail during the nineteenth chapter on a simple, yet profound topic - a motif that recurs throughout the text: eggs. Eggs, as a symbol of fertility are used through Atwood's expertly crafted use of texts to come to represent, in the reader's mind, an image of what the handmaids themselves are: fragile, fertile possessions to be broken and beaten by the males in the patriarchal society. ^{* PARA} One interesting choice of wording I find particularly useful in this section is 'I think this is what God must look like: an egg.' for not only does it reiterate the prominent role religion plays on our narrator's mind, it too associates God with the handmaids ~~to~~ themselves, and also with femininity - a first glimpse into Atwood's own criticism of the third feminist wave.

Ideas of feminism are extremely evident throughout 'The Handmaid's Tale', but it would be foolish to overlook the significant feminist undertones apparent in 'Frankenstein'. Wollstonecraft's 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women' is



regarded as one of the world's first feminist texts, so it thereby stands to reason feminist ideas would have been present in Shelley's mind whence writing his gothic tale.

It is harder to argue the case for 'Frankenstein' being a feminist book for the startlingly obvious lack of female voices present within. Due to Shelley's structuring the novel in a Chinese-box model, we are able to read multiple levels of diegesis — all of which are male. The only time we read any female speech is in the epistolary form of Elizabeth's letter; a brief note again retold through a male character's perspective.

What this appears to show is an acute awareness on Shelley's behalf of the contextual limitations women derive her time faced. Her writing in 'Frankenstein' can most definitely be read as a critique of the suppression of female voices in the nineteenth century, explicitly detailing what problems can arise when women are neglected and the male ego goes too far in its desirous ambitions.

Alternatively, there is an argument to be found within the very first line of the text: "To Mrs Saville". Having the entire narrative crafted around a series of letters sent from Robert Walton to his sister, we are told of different



diegetic levels all retelling one whole tale in multiple perspectives. The accuracy of these accounts are entirely subjective & as on a base level, what we are ~~for~~ reading is in effect Walton's retelling of Frankenstein's retelling of the creature's plight. But deeper still - we are to assume these letters have been received by Margaret Saville: a female. Could, in deciding to structure the text in such a manner, Shelley have been making a poignant argument on how, although it is the males in society who do the talking, it is in fact the women who are the necessary reception of these readings and therefore required for the publication of such? Nobody knows in truth, but an interesting point of discussion can be seen nevertheless and thusly shines light on Shelley's, like Atwood's, criticism of the treatment of women during their respective times.

The diegetic levels in 'Frankenstein' are crucial to the reader's understanding of the text and having multiple narrative voices helps Shelley's reader to understand even character from their own point of view. Atwood does not do this. Up until the Historical Notes, the entirety of her novel is given in the first person narrative of Offred, a handmaid. We are, in 'Frankenstein' dubious of how accurate accounts can be when passed on through word of mouth, and yet even though we have only one person's version of events



told in 'The Handmaid's Tale', we are equally as aware of how acute the information we are given on her.

'This is a reconstruction' Offred tells us time and again; by having her narrator doubt her own accuracy, Atwood is able to create an underlying atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion - precisely mirroring that which the handmaids within her created society feel. A poignant choice on her behalf is to keep the true identity of Offred, her real name, unknown to us; if we cannot be trusted with her name, how should we trust the information / accounts she is giving to us? 'That is a reconstruction, too.'

Tabula rasa, as I stated early on in my essay is an argument ever present in Shelley's 'Frankenstein' and resonates equally as well in 'The Handmaid's Tale'.

'...the companions of our childhood always possess a certain power over our minds which hardly any late friend can obtain,' write Shelley in the final chapter. All too often we see arguments of nature versus nurture coming to the forefront of ~~what~~ ^{the causes} of human behavior and in both respective texts, Mary Shelley and Margaret Atwood attempt to answer this.

In their criticism of human behavior, both writers seem to come to ~~the same~~ ^{different} conclusions ~~that it is~~ ^{over whether it is} society which



shapes our moral grounding and behaviours more so than
our upbringing, or the opposite. For while the creature's
evident lack of culture from Victor is shown by Shelley
to be ^{Frankenstein's} true evil, in a sense his abandonment is
what causes the creature's malignant state of being.
Atwood wholeheartedly embraces the idea that it is
society that molds mankind and our behaviours,
repeating that cliche phrase 'Context is all.'