

# **Examiners' Report**

## **June 2025**

**GCE English Language & Literature 9EL0 02**

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# Introduction

In Unit 2 of GCE English Language and Literature (9EL02) 'Varieties in Language and Literature', candidates are expected to apply the skills of close, contextualised, comparative reading, showcasing knowledge of both literary and linguistic terms and concepts. They need to synthesise their learning, integrating language and literature together, in order to analyse a short unseen prose text and two studied literary works. Their work in both areas is organised thematically: candidates pursue one of four topics ('Society and the Individual'; 'Love and Loss'; 'Encounters'; 'Crossing Boundaries'). In their examination responses, candidates are expected to demonstrate evidence of wider reading in, and thinking about, the topic they have studied.

Section A involves the analysis of one unseen extract. Candidates are expected to present an organised, fluent commentary on the writer's choice of structure, form and language, making inferences on how these authorial choices are shaped by the attitudes, values and ideas detectable in the text, and from their wider knowledge of any contextual forces exerting influence upon the writing or the reception of the text. They should show evidence of broad understanding of their chosen theme in their analysis, using it to enrich the specific discussion of the passage presented for analysis.

Section B assesses candidates' knowledge of the creative methods used in the crafting of, and the readers' reception of, two studied literary texts. The texts must be aptly contextualised, using contextual materials relevant to the question focus. The texts must also be compared and contrasted on points of significant relevance. Many aspects of the works are suitable for comparison, including the manifest content (plot, character, theme, setting); the literary and linguistic techniques used by the writers; the contextual factors shaping the texts' production and/or reception. All such contextualisations and comparisons must however strive to be relevant to the specific question asked.

It is vital that centres are aware that Sections A and B do not correspond to language and literature exclusively. There are still a small number of candidates who do not deploy terms and concepts drawn from linguistic analysis to aid their analysis of the literary texts studied. The Specification and the Section B Mark Scheme make it very clear that literary texts should be subjected to an integrated language and literature approach.

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## Overview of the 2025 Examination Series

### (i) Overview of SECTION A

Stronger answers looked at the unseen text as a whole and were able to discuss it as a complete piece of writing, rather than as a series of techniques to be identified. While many lower and lower-middle band candidates are able to detect a fair range of linguistic and literary features and offer mostly accurate definitions of terminology (AO1), there was not always evidence of an ability to articulate the effect of such techniques, or to account for the author's purposes in crafting them (AO2).

There was, as always, some evidence of candidates using the often rather limiting approach of working chronologically through the extract, sometimes paragraphing their own work in

accordance with those of the passage. The danger of this approach is that, if the candidate is pressed for time, the final paragraphs of the extract are neglected.

The most successful answers discussed the implications of specific lexical, syntactical, and structural crafting in the context of the entire passage. They were able to move beyond feature-spotting and to explore shifts in register, as well as generic conventions and deviations. The illuminating deployment of supporting relevant contextual material (AO3) also had a significant effect on achievement.

## **(ii) Overview of SECTION B**

Markers are very aware that Section B makes many demands of candidates in an exam setting. Ensuring all four Assessment Objectives are met while analysing two complex literary texts using both language and literature frameworks requires a good deal of practice before the exam, and strong time-management skills in the exam hall.

Many excellent responses were produced, and the post-Covid improvement detected in recent years was sustained and achievement levels this year were directly comparable to those seen in 2019.

Candidates typically spend around 90 minutes on this part of the examination, and structuring an answer well is key to success. There are many ways of organising an answer, but the most popular structure features a brief introduction, followed by two or better still three substantial sections, each discussing some aspect of the question focus. This tends to work well, especially when relevant AO3 context is used to further the discussion in each of the three sections. (This is generally preferable to the 'front loaded' contextual introductions, in which context is concentrated into the introductory paragraph and not subsequently referred to.) 2025 saw fewer answers that seemed to be over-prepared (typical features of the pre-prepared, 'learned-off' response include a lack of agility at adapting this material to the precise demands of the question, and spurious comparisons.)

AOs 1 & 2: There was ample evidence that most centres are preparing candidates well on the technical aspects of poetry, drama, and prose narrative. Successful answers tend to discuss in detail specific aspects of poetic structure and metre, and can relate individual poems to the wider concerns of the collection in which they appear; drama candidates tend to do well when considering theatrical techniques such as stage directions; awareness of narratology can really help candidates in determining the attitudes and values that underpin the story being told in the fiction texts. While the labelling of parts of speech or sentence types does garner some AO1 achievement, it tends to ring hollow unless it is tied to AO2 analysis of authorial crafting for effect.

AO3: The best answers ensured that contextual materials were thoughtfully selected to assist the analysis of language and literary features in the texts. Answers providing fewer contextual factors of relevance tended to outscore answers which included huge amounts of impressively remembered but ultimately irrelevant detail. Contexts for textual production (socio-historical details, intertextual relationships, staging/publishing history, authorial biography, etc.) were more often deployed than contexts of reception (reviews, criticism, cultural influence, personal response). A blend of both tends to produce the richest answers. 2025 saw a marked rise in the number of students using psychoanalytical methods of analysis, principally Freud and Jung. This was most impressive when the analysis was specifically tethered to the demands of the question. In 2025, it tended to work better for Question 8, which asked about how individuals were emotionally affected by the crossing of boundaries, but less so for the other questions.

AO4: The 2025 cohort produced work that was mostly impressive in the quantity and quality of AO4 comparative analysis. There was little evidence of unbalanced work, and the use of spurious comparative terms declined again. Candidates clearly now know that markers are alert to unearned uses of terms such as 'similarly', etc., when no genuine comparison is being made. As ever, the best comparisons are those that compare/contrast the deployment of a specific literary

or linguistic feature in two texts, shared or contrasting aspects of context, and subtle aspects of theme.

## Question 1

This was again by far the most popular option: approximately two-thirds of the entire cohort opt for 'Society and the Individual'. As always, those candidates who were able to consider the structure of the whole text tended to fare better. The final paragraph's comments on women had a significant bearing on the piece's purpose and helped to clarify how it was engaging with its audience, and candidates who chose to work through the passage, line by line, often ran out of time before commenting on it. Less successful answers tended to get drawn into analysing the specific meaning of the dream sequences reported by the author, when what was more likely to accrue marks was analysis of their use as a cohesive device, linking the beginning and end of the passage, or a contextual point about why dreams are seen as significant and worthy of sharing in confessional pieces such as this one.

This is a fine example of an answer to Question 1.

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 ☒

In Margo Price's magazine article for *Gentleman's Quarterly* magazine, she ~~conveys~~ conveys to her audience the difficulties she faced prior to her quitting drinking, and why she stopped. She likely intended to share her experience in the hopes of readers relating and finding comfort in her writing. The GQ magazine's readers will be of the more sophisticated end of the magazine reader population, and therefore this is Price's audience. With her reflective and honest voice, she ~~also~~ also adheres to genre conventions, using a ~~relatively~~ relatively formal, unmitigated voice and cultural references for her audience in her magazine article.

Price shares with her audience what made her drink as much as she did in the first place, telling them that during the 'late summer and early fall of 2020' she was drinking more often. She writes that this was due to 'the election and the political climate and the cyber bullying and threats' which affected her. This syndetic list shows the extent to which 2020 was a troubling year for Price, and therefore makes it easier for readers to understand her reliance on alcohol. This is also an element that much of Price's audience may well

relate to, as the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led to a decline in mental health for much of America and other nations. Her reference to the political event of 'the election' will also resonate with her readers. The 2020 election of Joe Biden saw huge backlash from right-wing ~~and~~ supporters of Donald Trump, making both the internet, as referenced by Price ('cyberbullying'), and the streets quite unsafe for those targeted by the right wing. 2020 was also the year that George Floyd, a Black man, was murdered in Minnesota by police, sparking Black Lives Matter protests and civil unrest across the USA. The sudden awareness of the state of police brutality and racism in America no doubt triggered many people to turn to coping mechanisms like Price and her drinking. This is therefore a cultural reference that her audience can relate to. Price also conveys the hardships of life prior to her quitting drinking ~~at~~ at the start of her article, writing that 'The longer you live, the more time you have to sit with death'. This axiom and unmitigated declarative as the opening sentence introduces the reflective, and up-front tone of the article, specifically by giving the second half of the sentence ~~an~~ an end focus, drawing attention to the theme of 'death'. This becomes a semantic field throughout: ~~'loss', 'die'~~ 'loss'; 'I'm not afraid to die'; 'I had to save my damn self.' This ~~text~~ syntactical patterning suggests to the reader that

Price's decision to stop drinking was, by enlarge, a matter of life or death, therefore conveying how important it was.

Throughout the article, Price also draws attention to the positive things in her life, creating contrast and juxtaposition. She describes all the things she had that made her life bearable: 'a foot in the door of the elusive music business, a loving partner, a beautiful family.' This ~~asyn-~~ asyndetic list and triadic structure shows Price's audience the opposing side to the death related semantic field and the difficulties Price was faced with. She ~~the~~ ~~claims~~ claims that she considered 'wiping [her] social media accounts off the face of the earth and retreating to... the place Leonard Cohen had studied with the Buddhists', ~~the~~ making another cultural reference her to a well known singer, further drawing in her audience, especially those interested in musicians, which gives the fact that Price herself is one, much of her audience may be. Following this, however she returns to the fact that she 'had a family to raise — a full-time job with overtime and no sick days'. This description ~~is~~ is of humorous effects, and another attempt to ~~the~~ relate to readers, this time, those of them who are parents. The humorous ~~the~~ voice conveys that she is not writing with any serious contempt for her duty as a mother, and ~~in~~ in addition she follows this sentence with, 'I loved it', though she then

goes onto describe how dealing with her family and her career 'was "a balancing act". This metaphor effectively conveys to Price's audience how difficult things were for her, as well as emphasising the contrast between good and bad again, this time with a visual image to help readers empathise. This collectively goes towards portraying exactly why Price was drinking a lot - and why it was necessary to give it up simultaneously.

Another thing Margo Price depicts in her magazine article is her duty and responsibility to herself and how this caused her decision to stop drinking. She writes how she's ~~not~~ avoided 'apologiz[ing] to the people in [her] life' or going to 'Alcoholics Anonymous meetings', therefore not following the recognised and generally pictured recovery of most drinkers by society. These cultural references help to make others feel seen who may have had a similarly unorthodox relationship to their end to drinking. Price then emphasises that 'The only one [she] feels] the need to beg forgiveness from is [her] self'. This closing line shows that her personal relationship with alcohol is something she had worked through and reconciled herself to, drawing her journey to a healthy close. It is emphasised by its placement, much like the single-line paragraph a few lines before: 'So, on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, I had my last drink.' This structural technique works to

highlight Price's control and decision to quit. She also adds an end focus to 'I had my last drink', it being a multi-clausal sentence, which shows the significance of Price making this decision for herself. This personal responsibility is also emphasized by her ~~asynthetic~~ asyndetic list earlier in the article: 'I drank because I was worried about the state of the world, I drank because I was bored, I drank because I missed you, I drank because I was unemployed, I drank because everyone else drinks.' The anaphora of repeating 'I drank' draws focus to the personal pronoun 'I'. This syntactical patterning conveys how it was Price's choice to drink, and therefore her choice and responsibility to quit. Her duty is portrayed through part of the aforementioned semantic field as well: 'I had to save my damn self'. Through this, Price shows her readers that it was as a duty to herself that she quit drinking and that it saved her.



This is successful in its work for all three AOs.

## Question 2

After a number of obituary or end-of-relationship pieces on recent papers, the 2025 unseen passage presented some new types of 'Love and Loss' for consideration. Deep emotional connection to a specific place, in this case the Pacific island of Tuvalu, and the risk of that place's disappearance as a result of environmental catastrophe, required candidates to be alert to new expressions of 'love' and 'loss'. Most candidates rose to the challenge well, and the best were able to articulate the purpose of the opening anecdote as a cohesive device and as a way into an exploration of deep emotional attachment.

This is a good response to Question 2.

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 ☒

In this extract taken from Kate Lyons' essay, she introduces the upcoming series of essays by ~~setting a~~ creating an emotive sense of urgency focussed on the losses of Tuvalu as a result of climate change. Written for The Guardian newspaper, the majority of the audience will have a more left-wing viewpoints and, being published in 2022, climate change will be an already prevalent point amongst society. As ~~the~~ temperatures rise globally due to the increase of ~~the~~ CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, Lyons focusses upon the detrimental impact this increase has upon the Pacific Island Tuvalu and creates an urgency to for change while <sup>including</sup> emotive anecdotes contrasted with harsh statistics to reinforce immediacy in the introduction to these essays.

The writer uses a variety of structural techniques <sup>and polysyndetic</sup> including asyndetic lists, varying sentence structures and one line stand alone paragraphs to both illuminate emphasis and add emotive description. The <sup>poly</sup>asyndetic list "of entire islands, of safety,

of lives, of species" emphasises the already significant losses of the island and the syntactical pattering "of" allows her writing to sound melodic and fluent, contrasting the harsh reality of the suffering. Alternatively, the ~~disparate~~ <sup>disparate</sup> ~~dis~~ stand alone paragraph "I own a basket I can never throw away." seems jarring and contradicting to the central focus of the forthcoming essays. By using this minor sentence as an unmitigated declarative, the audience questions the significance of the basket and its relation to the effects of a deteriorating climate. This minor sentence contradicts the following complex sentence of "it is deeply impractical... impossible." This ~~o-jane~~ contrasting structure reflects the further juxtaposition Lyons uses throughout when contrasting the beautiful nature of the island to the catastrophic destruction. By using the symbolism and anecdotal feature of the basket to introduce these essays the ~~para~~ extract provides a more personal and relatable tone as many western readers will also have sentimentally if impractical, decor / items in their homes.

Furthermore, Kate Lyons uses many elements and techniques to highlight contrast and create

a divide) perhaps ~~refers~~ reflecting the divided culture between the authenticity of 'island life' and the superficial nature of western civilisation in a time of vastly progressing technological advancements and social identities. She uses antithetical semantic fields of both politics - "forum", "prime minister", "policy works" and "NGO bosses" - and the beautiful simplicity of nature - "swimming at sunrise", "perfect warm water" and "white-sand beaches". This imagery in comparison to the government projects the writer's plea to protect the raw, untouched beauty of the island. By using the juxtaposition of 'victims' and 'heroes' Lyons instils a sense of urgency and hope, urging western audiences to preserve the natural beauty. The author uses facts such as "4,000 km north-east" and "10-15cm" to demonstrate the harsh reality while using the idyllic imagery of the beach to connect with the hearts and ~~the~~ dreams of the audience.

By using a combination of personal pronouns such as "I own", "I visited" and "I have not experienced" and collective pronouns including "we all" and "they need", the writer ~~is~~ invokes a ~~more~~ personal tone while uniting the

audience to inspire action. She reinstates how the changes in the climate and the effect to travel will impact her directly and how a collective effort is needed to preserve the remaining beauty of the island. ~~The~~ Kate Lyons uses discourse markers and temporal adverbials such as "Three years ago," "This week," and "One morning" reinforcing the idea of time and urgency to save the island. This allows the voice to be anecdotal and urgent and introduces the essays to show how they are recent and a pivotal point <sup>for</sup> in social change.

Overall, Kate Lyons introduces the upcoming series of essays linked to UN Climate Summit by instating a sense of urgency and the need for collective social change and assistance while appealing to readers of the Guardian by showing direct impact and reliable anecdotal features.



This is successful in its work for all three AOs.

## Question 3

The 2025 passage was something of a gift for candidates following the 'Encounters' strand, with Laura Coleman's *The Puma Years* providing candidates with opportunities to discuss her encounters with the Bolivian Jungle generally, and a rescued puma more specifically. All the classic features of encounter writing were on display, and candidates were able to write at length on the many rhetorical techniques Coleman deployed. However, AO3 performance was not so successful. Candidates did not long consider the piece's purpose or audience, and very few engaged with how the author's European heritage may have shaped her understanding of the South American environment in which she was situated.

This is a good example of a high Level 4 response to Question 3.

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 ☒

Throughout the extract, Laura Coleman presents her encounter with Wayra, a recently rescued puma, as memorable and exciting, as well as having elements of fear and uncertainty. It being her first experience presents elements of the unknown<sup>and danger.</sup> to the audience and her deep and emotional <sup>description</sup> ~~description~~ of her thoughts and feelings create an immersive experience for the reader to share with her, adhering to conventions of a memoir genre. Through imagery, simile and structure Coleman presents the encounter as life-changing.

The extract begins with heavy imagery, focusing on senses of smell and sight to craft the immersive experience. "Whiffs of scent slam into me, choking me" suggest elements of force and shock, emphasised by the ~~dyo~~-dynamic verb "Slam". The triad of adjectives "see sweeter, thicker, heavier" suggest a much more personal experience of Coleman and shares the experience step by step with the audience, recounting it for dramatic ~~effect~~ to create a reflective tone, as is conventional to the genre. These adjectives anticipate the later description of "sickly, rotten" smell, again

constructing that shared immersive encounter through detailed description. Coleman's aim of the beginning is to intrigue audiences and craft a sense of enigma, the encounter is presented as dramatic and the imagery allows the audience to relive the experience. The genre of a memoir usually details a personal experience and features descriptive language to allow the audience to imagine the encounter and ~~relive~~ experience it. The fact it's her first experience with Wyra emphasises the inexperience.

As the extract progresses, her first meeting with Wyra quickly turns from fear to admiration, using imagery and dialogue ~~to~~ to craft James greeting to Wyra which perhaps allows her to feel more at ease through her presentation of James' demeanor. The adverb "abruptly" mimics the sudden change in tone to a more deep emotional encounter, emphasised by the nouns "curiosity" and "Anticipation" formatted in minor sentences, to perhaps ~~mimic~~ reflect her feelings of overwhelm and anxiety. The similes "her eyes ... as green as the tops of those paddle shaped trees" and "nose, ~~as~~ pink as the tip of the sunset" creates imagery of peace and tranquillity, mirroring her own emotions transforming from fear to awe. Perhaps this juxtaposition of the dangerous nature of the encounter

with a wild predator and how ~~the~~ Coleman presents it so casually ~~to~~ aims to shock audience and ~~dispt~~ reflect her own feelings of unknowing and inexperience. ~~This is further emp~~ This juxtaposition is further emphasised by ~~the~~ Jones greeting to ~~the~~ Wayra, presented as friendly and non lethal, again contrasting the animals nature and audience expectation.

Towards the end of the extract, Coleman's tone becomes much more fearful and overwhelmed by the Wayra "hiss[ing]" at her, ~~her~~ Coleman's description of how she "whirls" creates imagery of suddenness and violence, ~~creating~~ almost recreating the shocking encounter for the readers through use of the ~~aggress~~ aggressive verb. The simile "like I've been kicked in the face" crafts her personal feelings as comparable to violence, emphasising the effect the encounter had on her. The ~~her~~ <sup>static</sup> ~~dynamic~~ verbs "violent" "savage" "utterly unquestionable" connote danger and violence, mimicking the predatory nature of ~~the~~ Wayra. The fast paced structure of the biadic structure mirrors Coleman's fear, crafting an emotional experience for the ~~as~~ readers to share. The contrast of ~~her~~ Coleman's overwhelmed nature and Jones' calmness perhaps ~~is~~ reflect the inexperience of ~~the~~ ~~as~~ ~~is~~ Coleman as in her first encounter. The extract ends with an asyndetic

list "receptionist, barmaid, marketing specialist" which crafts Coleman's experience with ~~teagera~~ Wayra as individual and lifechanging. The extensive list crafts Coleman as someone with a lot of life experience, which ~~met~~ makes her encounter much more reliable to the reader and the idea of her having all this experience and nothing "could have prepared [her] for this" again emphasises the experience as a ~~one~~ once in a lifetime encounter. The ellipsis also create a more dramatic, suspenseful tone, suggesting the encounter was overwhelmingly lifechanging.

In conclusion, Coleman crafts her tone, structure and techniques to reflect the dramatic encounter with Wayra and present it to ~~an~~ an audience as lifechanging. In the context of the genre, Coleman crafts her personal and individual encounter ~~to~~ to share with readers and the imagery, <sup>similes</sup> ~~verbs~~ and ~~verbs~~ create an immersive experience for the audience to ~~that~~ encounter too.



All three AOs are met successfully.

## Question 4

The 'Crossing Boundaries' unseen passage, an extract from Jenni Radcliffe's memoir on her work as a 'burglar for hire', produced the widest range of responses out of the four unseen texts in 2025.

Most candidates were alert to its breezy humour, and the part played by its mixed register in the crafting of the comic tone. Some answers however got derailed by debating, at excessive length, the moral boundaries that Radcliffe crossed in her working life. The passage was replete with language features for analysis, and was rich in contextual interest too, given the author's playfulness with her social class origins and her work as a woman in a field that is, in the popular imagination at least, almost exclusively the preserve of men.

As ever, the best answers were those that could smoothly integrate their AO1, AO2 and AO3 performance, arguing how the piece's class and gender inflections helped to shape the author's choices of language and structure.

This is a fine example of a response to Question 4.

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 ☒

Jenny Radcliffe uses ~~a~~ a range of methods, such as tricolons and familiar collocations, to explain her work as a 'burglar for hire'. The euphemism of 'burglar for hire' in the book title 'Confessions of a Burglar for Hire' from 2022 establishes the informal register she uses in order to entertain her fans, and those interested in security and her line of work, as well as to mock those who underestimate her abilities. In the ~~to~~ prologue of her book, she foreshadows ~~challenging~~ situations where her ability has been underestimated but she has remained vigilant. The prelude to the contents of her book is a genre convention of prologues.

~~At~~ Radcliffe begins explaining her work as a 'burglar for hire' with the tricolon 'amusement, fear and incomprehension' which immediately outlines the obscure nature of her job, befitting of the intriguing book title. The juxtaposition of the abstract nouns 'amusement', 'fear' and 'incomprehension' inform readers that there will be elements of humour ~~and~~ throughout the book by foreshadowing the intricate ~~processes~~ of her job and the contrasting reactions people have of ~~it~~. Radcliffe uses ~~the~~ metonymy in the opening sentence 'A mixture of amusement, fear and incomprehension<sup>3</sup> flashed across the faces of <sup>the</sup> nine suits sitting in front of me' in which the noun 'suits' is used to refer to formal business.

men and employees. The colloquial language establishes the informal register Radcliffe uses in her prologue whilst also introducing a confident voice regarding her job and abilities.<sup>②</sup> The use of 'the suits' throughout the text dehumanises the people who employed her, with the definite article 'the' suggesting that she sees 'the suits' as her targets because she received 'a very decent pay cheque' to test ~~the~~ the company's security. This confident <sup>in her ability</sup> voice ~~and~~ adds to a sense experienced voice ~~which~~ and continues with the simple sentence 'be careful what you wish for'. The simple sentence is emphasised by its separation from other paragraphs and establishes the topic for her book (a genre convention of prologues): her ability to prove the people who 'hadn't really expected her to do well' wrong. <sup>③</sup> The lexical phrase 'faces of the nine suits' has implications of a card game to suggest Radcliffe 'played' 'the suits'. <sup>P// (paragraph break)</sup>

Radcliffe's informal register continues throughout the prologue with colloquial language such as 'made myself a coffe in their kitchen', which also highlights her skills as a 'burglar for hire', and phonetic language such as 'sigh'. Radcliffe's confidence <sup>readers, even fans,</sup> in herself and informal register may unnerve her ~~fans~~ as she crosses an ethical boundary with the the tricolon 'How I'd got to know their security guards online, watched them at a distance and singled out the ones who were easily distracted'. The tricolon, particularly the verbs 'watched' and 'singled' in 'singled out' imply stalkersh behaviour from Radcliffe and create ethical dilemmas for readers who may wonder if this behaviour is something

they can condone since Radcliffe is doing it following an enquiry from 'the young managing director' who 'looked very uncomfortable' at the display of Radcliffe's work against his <sup>security</sup> ~~selling~~ system. This ~~is~~ impact relates to the ~~not~~ <sup>abstract</sup> nouns 'fear' and 'incomprehension' which Radcliffe uses to describe the reaction to her work at the start. ~~These~~ crossing of an ethical boundary is confidently reinforced by the quadrantic list 'could be used variously to sell, copy, coerce or bribe' in which the <sup>verbs and</sup> jargon used by Radcliffe are subject-specific to her role and semantically relate to her job as a 'burglar for hire'. This also relates to the noun 'confessions' used in the title of the book, which establishes Radcliffe's <sup>voice</sup> ~~tone~~ as she describes her work as a 'burglar for hire' <sup>①</sup> a secretive and immoral sense of work, which the contents of the prologue immediately establish and foreshadow. Readers of the book will have seen this title and understood so would therefore be receptive to its <sup>slightly scandalous</sup> content.

Radcliffe's confident voice shifts as she explains her work as a 'burglar for hire' shifts to one of mocking dramatics towards her clients 'the suits' who ~~can~~ undermined her and overlooked her abilities. The use of ~~contin~~ consecutive rhetorical questions 'I mean, a professional burglar from Liverpool, who can break into high-security sites?' and 'Generally talking her way in, using that working-class humour and charm, and lobbing around nicking stuff?' establish a fast-paced sense of mockery ~~as we~~ aimed at 'the suits'. This is reinforced by the colloquial language 'lobbing around

and nicking stuff' and 'I guess it's funny until it happens to you' which imply effort and hardwork from Radcliffe to get where she is but also invite the readers to laugh at the expense of those she blindsided with her 'working-class humour and charm'. The <sup>abstract</sup> noun charm is also euphemistic for stealing and manipulating in this case. The confident voice returns towards the end with the familiar collocations 'game recognises game' and 'never play a player' which in which the informality, alongside the alliteration (plosives in 'never play a player'), are used to entertain the readers about Radcliffe's work and elevate her above those who underestimate her due to her identity, crossing a gender boundary.

In her prologue, Jenny Radcliffe relates an example of an occasion where she put her working methods into practice and precludes to the contents of her book which likely confronts gender prejudices and societal ~~ex~~ disapproval and commendment in regards to her ~~work~~ as a 'burglar for hire'. This is strengthened by her use of reported speech and the simile 'It was about as secure as a children's playhouse' which are implemented to mock her clients and present a skilled and knowledgeable demeanour.



This answer is impressively alert to the passage's humour, and to its social class and gender contexts.

## Question 5

*The Great Gatsby* was again the most popular anchor text, with *Great Expectations* a distant second. No answers were reported on *The Bone People*, and, sadly, again, there were few takers for *The Wife of Bath*. The most popular combinations of texts were, once again *The Great Gatsby/Othello* and *The Great Gatsby/The Whitsun Weddings*. Hansberry's *Raisin in the Sun*, a little-studied text back in 2017, is now almost as popular as the Larkin poems, and is chosen almost always in combination with *The Great Gatsby*.

The question focus ("Characters who conform to or defy social expectations") was meat and drink to the class of 2025. Almost all candidates were able to identify a variety of examples of such defiance or conformity, but of course, the trick with this task is to find meaningful comparisons between the texts' approach to such defiance or conformity, all the while analysing each text's deployment of language and literature features and contextualising its production and reception.

The question invited more discussion of Jay Gatz/Gatsby, and less of Daisy Buchanan, than in previous series, though Myrtle Wilson's refusal to accept her working-class status was, as so often, central to many answers. Estella and Joe were most often cited in the Dickens responses.

With so many set piece moments to select from, there were very few brief answers, though some did, still, resort more to storytelling or 'analysis-lite', which inevitably limited their AO achievement. To get into Level 4, a purposeful discussion of linguistic and literary features and their effects is essential. There are still candidates who write fluently and show distinct signs of being able to understand the texts in a sure-footed way who cannot get out of Level 3 due to a lack of specifically linguistic or literary analysis. (See last year's Report for an example of such an answer to Question 5, or, in this year's report, the Question 8 exemplar.) On a more positive note, several markers confirmed the trend, first noted last year, of candidates who are studying Larkin offering a more thorough analysis of poetic form than before and during the pandemic. Drama-specific terminology is appearing more often in the Hansberry responses, too, though it is far from universal.

This is a high achieving answer on *The Great Gatsby* and *Othello*, the most popular text pairing.

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 5 ☒

Question 6 ☐

Question 7 ☐

Question 8 ☐

Please write the name of your two studied texts below:

Text 1:

The Great Gatsby

Text 2:

Othello

Within both texts, both writers represent individuals who conform to and defy society's expectations in a plethora of ways. Fitzgerald's 1925 social realist novel of The Great Gatsby details the journey of eponymous tragic hero Jay Gatsby, through the lens of unreliable heterodiegetic narrator Nick Carraway, as he attempts to pursue an idealised version of The American Dream during the 1920s boom. In doing so. Meanwhile, Shakespeare's 1604 fatal calamity based on Cinthio's Gli Hecatommithi focuses on the titular "noble general" Othello as he attempts to navigate ~~the civilised~~ this cultural ambivalence via the civilised, highbrow culture of Venice and ~~more~~ <sup>vs</sup> unstable, rebellious setting that is the "warlike isle" of Cyprus; this tragedy highlights a man's struggle to confront his internalised racism and

other prejudices through the intradiegetic Machiavellian character Iago, whose soliloquies and frequent usage of dramatic irony allow Shakespeare to depict an individual's struggle in residing within social constraints. For Gatsby, we ~~not~~ witness his transformation through Nick's hyperbolic description of Gatsby as "a ~~to start~~, Nick's usage of aphorism via the ~~and~~ his father's analeptic deixis — "son of God", with this Biblical bricolage via this analogy of Gatsby's status as the "perfect gentleman" vs ~~the~~ "elegant young rakehell" almost elevating him to a position of power and authority, allowing him to transgress social norms through Nick's subjective storytelling. However, we do see through his eventual peripeteia that Gatsby's "Platonic conception of himself" is a simulacra of the self-made man who uses bootlegging and attempted conspicuous consumption through his mansion and clothes, evident in Chapter 3 via Owl Eyes' asserting that "This guy's a regular Belasco"; with this cultural code — Barthes — would resonate with 1920s audiences that would recognise Belasco's recognition for imitation through realistic sets. Tom is the one who truly sees through this via his anamnasis of "Mr Nobody from Nowhere" — serving as analeptic irony to Chapter 4 when Gatsby proclaims to Nick how he didn't want him to think he was "just some

nobody" and pejorative diction of "a cunning swindler", serving as positive face-threatening acts (Goffman) that emanate the populism of Catsby's counter-hegemonic stance of ~~new~~ new money vs Tom's hegemonic status of old money decorum that crushes Catsby's chances of sustaining an authentic ~~future~~ ~~future~~ future through his constructed hyperreality; from a Marxist POV, we can see that Catsby's introjection into upper-class social etiquette was destined for collapse - evident through Nick's melancholic declarative of "Myrtle Wilson's tragic achievement was forgotten" in Chapter 8 and how although she "changed her costume" to project this performative femininity (Butler), the virgin-whore dichotomy punished her - and his eventual demise in Chapter 9 from the McGuffin of the car snap seals his fate for defying societal expectations

Meanwhile, in Othello, we can see Othello's initial assimilation into Venetian culture that subverts Alvarado's Racial Stereotypes Theory such as the epithet of "the valiant Moor"; Iago's syndetic listing of how "the Moor is of a constant, noble, loving nature" ~~that~~ and his pro-feminist declarative of "And let her speak of me before her father" concerning Desdemona proclaiming Othello's ~~to~~ genuinity to Brabantio; this form of lyric expression by Shakespeare regarding Othello's

treatment of women defies the dominant ideology at the time; women were expected to adhere to the patriarchal dominance - books - of their fathers and husbands, retaining dignity in a society that would punish insubordination. We can see this in Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* when Petruchio calls his wife "my ass, my ox, my everything", reinforcing genre repetition through established gender roles. However, from a postmodern reading, Shakespeare doesn't fully capture a modernist ideology since we can presume Desdemona and the other females were played by male actors, perhaps promoting a negotiated reading from Feminists.

However, ~~the fact~~ we do see Othello regress to the theatre convention of Moors as dangerous and violent through his lexical and psychological breakdown caused by Iago's exploitation of his hamartia, that being insecurity. When the handkerchief - also a MacBook like T66's car snap scene - is lost and planted in Cassio's possession, Othello and Iago spins lies into Othello's mind; we can see Othello's metamorphosis such as describing Desdemona as a "lewd minx" or the "cunning whore of Venice", with these derogatory terms highlighting the social norm of the virgin-whore dichotomy ~~via~~ by showing

how irreversible the idea of making one's husband a "cuckold" is and enforcing patriarchal norms. We also see his shift from ~~verse to prose~~ to blank verse such as his epizyme of "blood, blood, blood" in reference to killing Cassio, conforming to Alvarado's idea of racial aggression; this line serves as proleptic irony - a postmodern convention - through Emilia's tragic proclamations of "Villainy, villainy, villainy", with Othello's characterisation drawing clear comparisons to Aaron the Moor by weaponising his "black vengeance" to kill Desdemona. Now, this may forge a negotiated reading from contemporary readers as although Othello's transformation ~~is~~ ultimately succumbs to regressive stereotypes, one must consider how Shakespeare had to appease his predominantly white audience though this affirmed white ethnocentrism, supporting Gilroy's belief that cosmopolitan conviviality is unattainable for ethnic minorities who ~~conform~~ to try to defy society's expectations of them.

After, Nick's usage of aphorism via his father's analeptic reference of "remember that all the people in this world haven't had the same advantages that you've had", with this euphemism clearly depicting the overarching theme of the novel which is the struggle for ~~identity~~ stability within an unyielding society; additionally, it also reminds the readership of

the epoch and how not everyone benefitted from the Cycle of Prosperity. We can see this in Chapter 6 when Nick mentions how Gatsby's parents were "unsuccessful Sam people", reflecting how groups such as ~~Sam~~ Farmers, old industries, immigrants and African-Americans didn't prosper within America the "America First" society illusion. Farmers had begun to overproduce food which meant that the value dropped and they were unable to pay off bank loans, leading to foreclosures. Similarly, we can see this representation of a social hierarchy through Iago's chiasmus of "We cannot all be masters, nor all masters cannot truly be followed", with this declarative not only insinuating his working-class background by suggesting he is almost this organic intellectual that can see through the class stratification, affirmed by his assertive dictum of "I know my price"; this dictum reference to money strengthens the interpretation that Iago is a proletarian man trying to ascend the Elizabethan hierarchy such as being a part of the nobility or gentry and this may be what partly fuels his revenge against Othello through his pre-existing defiance of ~~so~~ social norms. To mitigate this, Iago still retains society's expectation

To sustain this, Iago retains society's expectation of Othello as an outsider though "an old black ram is tugging your white ewe"; with the binary antithesis of "black ram" and "white ewe" showing ~~so~~ Elizabethan society's expectations for homogeneity over diversity (this parallels Iago's assertion in Chapter 7 though his apathetic tone of "next they'll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between ~~the~~ black and white", suggesting that both societies embrace this symbolic annihilation of egalitarian representation through trivialised depictions of race. However, due to the primary focus on race as a central theme, Shakespeare much more successfully displays this dichotomy). Additionally, the animalistic imagery as a form of debasement - a recurring motif in the play - does reflect Butler's idea of gender performativity via Othello as the strong, dominant male is Desdemona as the fertile and delicate goat destined to reside within the domestic sphere and be subjugated to the male gaze. We can see this through Iago's assertion that "she is spot for love", with this Greek allusion not only affirming Shakespeare's use of bricolage but also adheres to the traditional ideology of men as the predators and women as the victims. This ~~is~~ reinforced by zoomorphism is reinforced when after Cassio

supposedly learns that Bianca wants him to propose to her; he remarks that "this is the own monkey's giving out" - serving as analeptic irony to Iago calling women "as prime as monkeys" -; suggesting that Bianca's attempts to defy the Great Chain of Being is recognised through the male counterparts, who project their frustrations onto her as a way to maintain society's expectations (this especially reflects bell hooks' idea of minority feminism through Bianca's identity as a Courtesan or "a housewife who by selling her desires buys herself bread or clothes" reflects how class can impact the extent that women endure patriarchal oppression; this parallels Chapter 5 in *The Great Gatsby* through the song sung by Gatsby's servant of "the rich get richer and the poor get - children"); for Cassio, it is a means to secure his "reputation, reputation, reputation", with this epizeuxis highlighting the importance of social standing.

We can see Iago address this <sup>to Othello</sup> through his attempted aphorism of "he that filches from me my good name robs me of that which not enriches him and makes me poor indeed"; serving as dramatic irony as he is the one who spends the play "filch"ing the "good name"s of individuals like Othello or the



and commendable woman is "to suckle fools". This infinitive of "to suckle" reinforces these outdated gender beliefs - forging an oppositional reading from radical feminists by promoting a separatist ideology - and offers a repeated representation (Gerbrger) of Desdemona as this idyllic construction of the Shakespearean woman. We can see this through the epithets of "divine Desdemona" or the simile "as fresh as Dian's visage"; perhaps suggesting that a part of her purity (suggested by Othello calling her "fair woman", with "fair" being a synonym for white and white being a semantic code of purity) is garnered from her Caucasian appearance. We can see this through the Duke's assertion to Brabantio that "your son's in law is far more fair than black", with this juxtaposition of colour emanating that Othello introjects this white-washer persona.

This is perhaps implied in *The Great Gatsby* through Daisy and Jordan wearing the "white dresses"; perhaps inferring that rigid racial hierarchies have played a factor into enabling societal norms; African-Americans were under the threat of the KKK and strict legislation of the Jim Crow laws, preventing a chance to strive for better.



This answer is working at an extremely high level, hitting all the Assessment Objectives with consistent top Level 5 quality writing.

The economy of expression allows the answer to cover a truly enormous amount of ground in its ten pages, as seen by the wealth of technical analysis and the breadth of judiciously selected quotation from the two texts. What impresses most of all is the application of complex critical theory to the texts. Best of all are the readings of Gatsby using Jean Baudrillard's concept of the simulacrum, and the regular referrals to post-colonial understanding of racial dynamics.

That said, some other attempts at applying theory are a little contorted in both idea and expression, e.g. the discussion of how feminist critics might consider Desdemona's character on the fourth page. But almost everywhere else, this answer is working at the highest level. It richly deserves full marks for its remarkable sophistication.



Discussing how readers might approach the text from different critical perspectives (e.g. looking at it through a Marxist or Feminist or Post-Colonialist lens) is a good way to obtain AO3 achievement, because it offers a "context of reception".

To maximise your score, however, you do need to be sure you have a basic but secure understanding of these theories. You also need to make points, and give examples, that are directly relevant to the question asked. This answer is always relating its use of critical theory back to the issue of conforming with or defying social expectation, and that's why it is so successful.

## Question 6

'Love and Loss' attracted many fewer candidates than the other three thematic strands. *A Single Man* and *Enduring Love* were paired together by almost all candidates. There were no takers for *Much Ado About Nothing* or *Betrayal*, and low single figures opted for Plath, the Metaphysical poets, and *Tess*.

No doubt the question focus on "settings" required a little more planning, but it offered a rich seam that many candidates mined effectively. Several referred impressively to the role played by the domestic setting at the start of *A Single Man*, and the liminal space of the beach at the end; *Tess*, likewise, being a rather picaresque text, offered a wealth of settings demanding analysis, most obviously Stonehenge.

This is a Level 4 answer on *A Single Man* and *Enduring Love*, by far the most popular text pairing.

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 5 ☒ Question 6 ☒

Question 7 ☒ Question 8 ☒

Please write the name of your two studied texts below:

Text 1:

A Single man

Text 2:

Enduring Love

Both writers use the themes of love and loss well in their novels to drive the narrative of their stories. McEwan uses these themes to drive a psychological Romance, whereas Isherwood utilizes them to explore the complexities of losing a partner. Today I will be diving into significant places where these themes occur.

Both texts are similar as a sense of loss is felt within the houses that the deceased are no longer in. This is best seen in A Single man as George and Jim used to "constantly constantly jogging, jostling, bumping against each other's bodies by mistake or on purpose, sensually, aggressively, awkwardly, impatiently, in rage or in love" as their house is quite small<sup>McEwan's logics</sup> in contrast to the big suburban houses popularised

by the American Dream at the time, which they used as it kept them close together and always in each others presence, therefore making the loss George feels greater as he's constantly in the house that feels like its missing a piece. <sup>(similar to Jean Logan who can't cope without her husband)</sup> This is reinforced by the tragic structure of prose sounds which gives the impression of the closeness George and Jim were experiencing each day and mimics the sounds of them bumping into each other to highlight the constant connection between the couple which is now broken. Furthermore, the excellent use of an asyndetic list of adverbs conveys the depth of Georges loss as he misses every emotion with Jim, not just the good and happy ones, which therefore gives George a retrospective tone as he's reminiscing about all of the times him and Jim shared in the house. <sup>(in contrast to his loss as she immediately assumed the worse of John)</sup> Moreover, the contrast in the adjectives "rage" and "love" reinforces the extent of Georges loss giving both the original audience and the contemporary audience a sense of empathy and understanding for Georges, now robotic, way of life as he can't cope well in his house without Jim. George also found difficulty coping due to homosexuality not being publically accepted at the time, so the

only place where Jim is left is the only place where George can be himself as being a homosexual in California wasn't decriminalised until 1976, 14 years after the novel is set. Isherwoods intentions were to show just how hard it would be to lose his partner, Don Bachardy, as the reason he wrote this novel was to explore the grief he would feel if Bachardy died. This is then reinforced as ~~the quote~~ George goes on "think what deep though invisible tracks they must leave, everywhere", the metaphor clearly showing how Jim is everywhere in the house, though invisible, he still deeply feels his presence as his love for him was so strong it made his loss even <sup>(the Jean Logan as her love for John was so strong she doubted this love)</sup> greater. Similarly, in <sup>her</sup> Enduring love Jean Logans house "seemed a perfect setting for sorrow" due to its old, run down appearance. A metaphor is successfully used to pre-judge Mrs Logan on her grief, before the audience knew the full extent of it, and to prepare them for her erratic behaviour when speaking about the supposed adultery her husband committed before he died. Sybillance is also subtly used to give the impression of a sad sign as the house mimics Mrs Logans feelings, therefore almost personifying

the house. Furthermore, the clever use of the evaluative adjective "perfect" reinforces the idea that the house is a reflection of Mrs Logan's feelings by implying that ~~Mrs Logan~~ the house looks as bad as it can get ~~as~~ as Mrs Logan has never felt worse. McEwan's aim throughout the entire book was to show the unconventionalities of love and to break the idealism of ~~it~~ <sup>love</sup> as it's not always easy<sup>↑</sup> (similar to Isherwood as he wanted to explore the grief of love), which ties into his post modernist way of writing as he's blended the genre of romance with a psychological thriller to emphasise his point of love isn't an easy emotion. Moreover, both the contemporary and original audience can relate to Mrs Logan's suffering as through the common emotion of grief it disables you from doing the usual cosmetic things and sometimes affects every part of your life (like George's house where every part of it reminds him of Jim). Overall, both George and Mrs Logan feel affected by their loss specifically in their houses, however George's house is a constant reminder of Jim whereas Mrs Logan's house reflects her emotions.

Both texts are also <sup>different</sup> ~~similar~~ as a sense of love and lust are felt in set places in a single man with George, however Jeds love doesn't have a set place as it invades every part of Joes life. This is best seen in a single man when George is at work and sees a tennis match and says "This game is cruel; but its cruelty is sensual and stirs George into hot excitement" when speaking in a third person inner monologue which ~~he~~ Isherwood does on purpose to show George dissociating from the lust and arousal he feels towards the tennis players, as theres a hint of shame in his voice as he feels he's betraying Jim. Furthermore, the metaphor at surface levels seems like a comment on the match, but deeper is a reflection of Georges outlook on life and how he sees his life as unfair because he lost Jim and because he can't openly express his grief. This is because of the criminalisation of homosexuals in 1962 and the stigma around the sexuality leading to George feeling isolated not only from society but himself and his feelings as he won't fully allow himself to accept his attraction<sup>(like how Joe can't accept Jeds irrational nature)</sup>; hence the third person narrative. This is reinforced by

the Sybillance used which gives a hushed tone to the sentence, therefore showing that Georges lust for the tennis players is something he is ashamed about not just because of Jim but because of his own inner conflict with society not allowing him to accept who he is. The original audience would be shocked and possibly disturbed by the description of homosexual attraction due to the stigma around homosexuals, however a more contemporary audience wouldn't be disturbed by the homoerotic passage but more the place George is at as he's on his way to work while speaking to another member of faculty. However, in Enduring Love Jed's love doesn't have a set place, it lingers as it consumes Joe's life and relationships. This is best seen ~~when~~ in Clonssas letter when "a stranger invaded our lives, and the first thing that happened was that you became a stranger to me." to express to Joe how irrational he had become due to Jed's love. The successful use of parallelism conveys the extent of the wedge that Jed and Joe drove into their relationship by Jed's all consuming obsession with Joe, and Joe's equally consuming

obsession with trying to rationalise Ted's feelings with logic. Furthermore the use of the metaphor in unison with the violent verb "invaded" conveys a sense of how quickly it drove Clonissa and Joe apart, therefore highlighting how ~~it found~~ Ted found his way into every aspect of Joe's life. Moreover, Clonissa also acknowledges the fact ~~by~~ that Joe became just as bad as Ted by repeating the \*noun "stranger" to emphasise how she feels she doesn't know Joe due to the imposition of Ted's love. McEwan's aim was to highlight the lack of legislation against stalking and show how quickly something can escalate, hence stalking laws were introduced in 1997, the same year *Enduring Love* was published. Moreover, Ted's all consuming love would make the ~~contemporary~~ <sup>original</sup> audience nervous as there was no protection for victims at the time, compared to a contemporary audience who would feel sympathetic towards Clonissa as Ted's love caused the man she loved to turn into someone she ~~doesn't know~~ <sup>(similar to how George feels guilty for finding someone else attractive)</sup> doesn't know. <sup>Overall,</sup> a ~~sense of place~~ significant place is used to show the feelings of

love, however George's ~~is~~ lust is specifically  
at work in comparison to Ted's love  
which is everywhere and all consuming,  
similar to God's love. which is McEwan's way  
of criticising religious beliefs, due to his  
humanist approach to life, through Ted.



This is a good answer, that seems, two pages in, to be heading for a rather higher score than it ultimately received.

The introduction to the answer is well focused, and the opening section makes great use of linguistic and literary terms to perform an impressive comparison of George's and Logan's homes. At this point, it seemed set fair for a high Level 4 score at least.

However, by the time we get to the conclusion of this opening section, the argument is becoming a little laboured, and it concludes by reiterating the already-made comparison again. The second section is less impressive, because it is less rich in AO1 terminology, and seems less firmly tethered to the precise demands of the question. More positively, the AO3 context, especially on Isherwood, remains strong throughout; AO4 comparisons come regularly and are mostly convincing.

Overall, it still displays enough achievement to be comfortably above Level 4/Level 3 boundary.



To maximise your score, develop a brisk efficient style of written expression, and avoid unnecessary repetitions.

## Question 7

The question focus - 'encounters which shock or surprise' – ensured that almost every candidate was able to produce several pages, discussing several such encounters. Markers observed that context was impressively handled, in the main, and comparisons likewise were more likely to be relevant and substantial than in previous series. This is very encouraging, but 2025 still saw some answers that took either an exclusively literary approach, to the exclusion of linguistics; or, more concerning still, performed no technical analysis at all, resorting to description, summary or 'analysis-lite'. As noted many times previously in this annual Report, answers that don't use Lang-Lit frameworks are very likely to hit a glass ceiling at the top of Level 3, and can only get that far if they are very detailed in their general analysis and contextualisation. (For an example of such an answer, see the Question 8 exemplar scored at 17 elsewhere in this Report.)

Regarding AO3, a notable feature observed by many markers was the popularity of taking a psychoanalytical approach to the texts, or, speculating what a psychoanalytic critic might say about the studied text. Freud and Jung were often cited, though the grasp of the method of psychoanalytical literary criticism was often rather tenuous. For this approach to AO3 to be successful, candidates need a basic but secure grounding in the theory, and, crucially, need to tether their use of it to the precise demands of the question. When this is done, the results can be most impressive, but when it isn't, the argument often feels somewhat speculative and pre-prepared. The attached exemplar for Question 7 below contains just such a usage of Jung, which only serves to interrupt what is, otherwise, a successful response, because the psychoanalytic interpretation isn't firmly attached to the question focus.

Carter's title story and 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' proved again to be the most popular choices of second text, with *Wuthering Heights* much the more popular of the two anchor texts.

This is a largely successful answer on *Wuthering Heights* and *The Bloody Chamber*, the most popular text combination for Question 7.

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 5 ☒ Question 6 ☒

Question 7 ☒ Question 8 ☒

Please write the name of your two studied texts below:

Text 1:

Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë

Text 2:

The Bloody Chamber by Angela Carter.

Both Brontë and Carter present the shock or surprise felt during unanticipated encounters with the class system, the reality of marriage and the power of female figures when challenging encounters of patriarchy and essentialism. As a proto-feminist in the patriarchal Victorian period and Carter, as a second wave feminist in the 1970s use encounters which generate shock and are unexpected to convey criticisms of the patriarchal and rigid social structures through the mistreatment of non-conformist, subordinate figures.

Both Brontë and Carter show the shock and surprise of female figures when encountering the harsh, unanticipated realities of marriage. In Wuthering

Heights Chapter 12, Cathy proclaims  
"I have been unruined from the Heights  
in converted at a stroke into Mr Linton,  
the Lady of Thrushcross Grange and my  
as a stranger, an exile and outcast" to  
display her shock at the unanticipated  
realities of marriage in the Victorian period.  
The noun phrase in apposition "Mr  
Linton, Lady of Thrushcross Grange" reflects  
how under the Law of Coverture, she has  
lost her individuality in marriage and has become  
identified only as an extension of her husband.  
The violent verb "unruined" along with  
the nouns "exile" and "outcast" create a  
semantic field of forced removal, reflecting  
Cathy's shock at the unanticipated loss  
of self-identity and freedom in her encounter  
with marriage. She challenges the ideas of  
Gilbert and Sullivan about the "Angel of the  
House" portrayal of women, reflecting Brontë's  
views on patriarchal marriage as a proto  
feminist. Furthermore, the quote in chapter  
12 from Cathy, "I wish I were a girl  
again half-savage and hardy and free"  
reflects the unanticipated confinement  
she encountered in her marriage to

Edgar Linton. The polysyndetic list of adjectives "half savage and hardy and free" creates a semantic field of individuality<sup>and wildness</sup>. Brontë is influenced by the Romantic celebration of individuality and shows how, in her patriarchal marriage, Cathy was denied this. The verb "must" reflects the entrapment of marriage as under the law of coverture in the Victorian period. ~~Marriages were~~ women in marriages were denied the power to reclaim their childhood liberty.

Similarly, Carter uses encounters that generate shock and surprise to show the naivety of women encountering the harsh reality of marriage. On page 11 the narrator describes how "he stripped me gauchement that he was as if he were stripping the leaves off an artichoke." The simile comparing her to the noun "artichoke" generates a voice of shock from the narrator as the marriage has rendered her dehumanised, rather than gaining her the higher status she had hoped for. The polysyndeton of the valent verbs "stripped" and "stripping" shows how like Cathy in her

marriage to Edgar Linton, the narrator has been stripped of her former identity. The verb 'stripped' has animalistic connotations, Carter, as a second-wave-feminist aims to raise awareness to issues of domestic violence that in the 1970s went unchallenged. If we take a Jungian reading of the text, we are seeing the Marquis' shadow self, this, like Brontë allows Carter to display the dangers of marriage for women within patriarchal structures. Similarly on page 11 when she describes herself as "bare as a lamb chop" it generates a shocking image with the simile comparing her to a simple piece of meat with the noun phrase "lamb chop". This also dehumanises the narrator and shows how, like Cathy in Chapter 12, she has lost her former liberties, rather than gaining power as both ~~see~~ females were indoctrinated to anticipate. The animalistic noun "lamb" conveys vulnerability suggesting the woman's purpose was to exist for male consumption. However, the noun "lamb" ~~represents~~ is possibly a biblical allusion to Jesus, connoting her with benevolence, to a

predominantly Christian readership in the 1970s Britain. Therefore, Brontë Carter like Brontë, shows how patriarchal marriage allow dangerous powerful male figures to diminish benevolent female figures like Cathy and the narrator, who due to ideology of the romanticized ideals of marriage they had imposed on them in youth, did not anticipate the horrifying reality of marriage.

Both Brontë and Carter use encounters with non-conformist or subordinate figures encountering wealth ~~the~~ or class systems to display criticisms of the class structures by using encounters which are not anticipated and generate surprise. Brontë does this in Chapter ~~three~~<sup>two</sup> when Heathcliff is brought to Wuthering Heights. He is described as a "dirty ragged black haired child" displaying the shock and surprise at his unanticipated arrival. The polysyllabic -chue "dirty" refers to both his physical condition as an orphan found on the streets but is also a metaphor for the shocking prejudice towards the underclass or immigrants. The ~~the~~ vague noun phrase "black haired

child" deindividualises Heathcliff and reflects Victorian ideas of physiognomy where they assumed he was innately bad based on his appearance. The noun phrase also mirrors the illustrations of Irish migrants in the London Times Illustrations who arrived to escape the famine, as Brontë's father raised money for them, Heathcliff may have been based on that too. Although his identity is deliberately left ambiguous as Heathcliff is a microcosm for the shocking prejudice towards all immigrants in the Victorian period in this unanticipated encounter. The quote in chapter four when Heathcliff's unanticipated change is described "He seemed a sullen patient child hardened perhaps to ill-treatment" reflects the damaging nature of the class-prejudice in the Victorian period. The adjective "patient" and noun "child" align Heathcliff with the cardinal virtue of patience, which challenges the prejudice and surprises a predominantly Christian Victorian readership, who, like Nelly Dean, would assume he was malevolent due to his underclass status. If all from a Marxist perspective Brontë is criticising

The rigid class structures of the Victorian period. The verb "hardened" reflects the surprising and unanticipated change in Heathcliff's character and is a euphemism for the abuse he endured. Brontë is likely influenced by the Blakean idea that children are born as a blank slate and become the product of their environment, as Heathcliff shockingly does.

Similarly, Carter uses encounters which generate shock and surprise through the unanticipated changes brought about by encountering the class system. On page 52, Beauty encounters London and is described that "she smiled at herself in mirrors a little too often". This unanticipated encounter shows the power of the class system to change an individual, like Brontë. Carter is influenced by Marxism. The verb "smiled" connotes an unexpected self-satisfaction, aligning Beauty with the sin of pride. The noun "mirror" reflects her new unanticipated encounter with her self-identity, yet this is superficial and purely based on her appearance. By doing this, Carter conveys enthusiasm of the affect

as a society which only places value on women's appearance due to the male gaze. The adverbial "a little too often" reflects the negative impact of wealth in leading to shocking alienation from others and yourself, a Marxist concept. Carter is likely influenced by the growing class divide in the 1970s under Ted Heath's government. Like Heathcliff, Beauty is negatively changed by her unanticipated encounter with the class system. Similarly on page 52 Beauty is described as surprisingly changed by her encounter with the class system when it says "She was learning at the end of her adolescence how to be a spoiled child". The antithesis between the infantilising noun phrase "spoiled child" connoting dependence and the ~~new~~ abstract noun "adolescence" connoting independence shows how like Heathcliff, encountering the class system has surprisingly reduced her. The verb "learning" reflects the indoctrinating, seductive nature of the class system, portraying London as an Edenic space where she faces temptation and changes in unanticipated ways. Therefore, Both both Bronte and Carter use unanticipated encounters

with class which change participants in surprising ways to critique class structures.

Both Brontë and Carter use surprising, unanticipated encounters as ~~ways~~ to reflect the power of women and challenge biological essentialism. In volume 2 chapter ~~three~~<sup>thirteen</sup> young Cathy is surprised by her ability to challenge Heathcliff claiming "Give me that key! I will have it... I would not eat or drink here if I were starving". As a proto-feminist, Brontë challenges ideas of biological essentialism showing the power of women to challenge patriarchy. The noun "key" is a phallic symbol, displaying her shocking desire for male power. The modal verbs "will" and "would" reflect her desire for power, a surprising contrast from the stereotypical female passivity seen ~~by~~<sup>in</sup> her mother, showing the need for change. The verb "starving" connotes protest, reflecting the growing protofeminist movement in the Victorian period. As a proto feminist Brontë uses this surprising, unanticipated encounter, shown by the exclamation "!" to reflect the need for change. Similarly

When young Cathy is described: "She trembled like a reed". The simile comparing her to the noun "reed" is ~~and~~ allusion to the Sirens in Greek mythology who transformed into a reed as a means of escapism. The verb "trembled" shows her shock at this unanticipated act of female confrontation, reflecting the overwhelming power of patriarchal norms. As a proto feminist Bronte used a pen name "Ellis Bell" which was not gendered, a sign of her resistance to complying to patriarchal expectations, ~~and~~

Similarly, Carter uses unanticipated encounters of women challenging patriarchy on page 104. The quote "Mother Mother you have murdered me" is unanticipated reflecting the outrage towards women challenging the patriarchal structure. The vocative "Mother" repeated uses a value of surprise. The noun "mother" connects the religious imagery of Mother Mary along with ideas of biological essentialism. Conflating this with the violent verb "murdered" reflects the ambitions of

radical feminism to dismantle these limiting roles for women. The shocking verb "murdered" also reflects the fierce opposition to second-wave feminism from men who saw it as a threat to their masculinity and an unanticipated challenge to their patriarchal status, like young Cathy towards Heathcliff. Similarly, the unanticipated quote "He will carve off his great man" subverts the norms of fairytales in which women are rescued by men, as the ~~woman~~ <sup>female</sup> saves herself. This is a ~~also~~ biblical allusion to Samson and Delilah and like young Cathy reflects the power of women to destroy patriarchy. The verb "carve" connotes remoulding, reflecting the ambitions of second-wave feminism and the noun phrase "great man" is a metaphor for patriarchy. Like Brontë, Carter is suggesting that the only way of dismantling patriarchal aggression is through female-led action, as seen in the 1970s from second-wave feminists, and Carter herself who left the confinement of patriarchal marriage to find liberty in Japan. PTO

In conclusion both ~~to~~ Brontë and Carter use encounters which surprise and shock participants as they are unanticipated to display criticisms of the class systems, to enhance patriarchal marriages and to show the power of women, challenging biological essentialism. As a second-wave feminist in the 1970s Carter and Brontë as a proto feminist in the Victorian period use these pieces to promote change and a move towards equality.



A long answer, well attuned to the political resonances of *Wuthering Heights* and *The Bloody Chamber*, making a series of richly contextualised points about how the texts are crafted to achieve specific political objectives.

At times, the argument could be more precise: the introduction of Carl Jung (an increasingly popular contextual reference) does little to illuminate the discussion here; and while Heathcliff encounters the injustices of the class system, it would be fairer to describe Carter's *Beauty* as encountering the emptiness of consumerism, a related phenomenon but not the precise comparison claimed. But each of its three sections are well developed, using a range of technical terms from linguistic and literary study. It's clearly a very sophisticated approach, but the predominance of word-level analysis, and the slight imprecisions noted above, keep it at the bottom end of Level 5.



Citing Marx, Freud, Jung, etc isn't inherently impressive; it only really works if the point being made is firmly tethered to the question asked.

## Question 8

The question focus for 2025 was on boundary crossings that have physical or emotional effects, a very open question that ensured all candidates had ready access to a range of textual examples. *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Dracula* are roughly equal in popularity as the anchor texts, and are quite often paired together; when not, the Rhys novel always combines well with *North*, and the Stoker text with *Twelfth Night* or the Rossetti poems. *Oleanna* no longer attracts centres, it seems, and *The Lowland* once again had no takers.

Markers noted a significant number of candidates deploying Freud and Jung in their answers, and certainly the phrasing for this year's Question 8 permitted such psychoanalytical interpretations. Centres and candidates are advised that any uses of critical theory need to be well grounded in a basic but secure understanding of that theory, and their application must also be relevant to the question asked, if credit is to be awarded. Not all the instances we saw in 2025 - either of psychoanalytic, or Marxist or Feminist or Post-Colonial literary theory - met that threshold.

This is a high achieving answer on *Dracula* and *Twelfth Night*.

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 5 ☒ Question 6 ☒  
Question 7 ☒ Question 8 ☒

Please write the name of your two studied texts below:

Text 1:

Dracula, Bram Stoker

Text 2:

Twelfth Night, William Shakespeare

Within Bram Stoker's gothic horror novel and Shakespeare's romantic comedy 'Twelfth Night' individuals cross boundaries that affect their physical and emotional state frequently. Stoker sees the character of Jonathan Harker as the epitome of emasculation of a Victorian gentleman and the failure of emotional repression which leads to breakdown, whilst Shakespeare in similar gender boundaries has to contemplate philosophically and introspectively of how to deal with the emotional tribulations of the gender boundaries. Both Stoker and Shakespeare also have characters that are affected both physically and emotionally by crossing social norm boundaries. Even as Lucy's decadence and Malvolio's self-perceived nobility and righteousness creates a sinister ending for both characters physically and emotionally.

Within *Dracula*, Jonathan Harker crosses significant gender boundaries that go against the convention of a Victorian gentleman and the dominance that men are supposedly meant to exude in society, due to the inherently patriarchal nature of Victorian England. Harker's imprisonment in Castle Dracula immediately applies the notion of a lack of autonomy and dominance as he says "I am a prisoner!". This exclamatory sentence creates a sense of entrapment and emasculation and his frantic nature is solidified as he says "I explored further, doors, doors, doors everywhere" the use of epiphora's further the notion of Harker's emasculation as he understands the severity of the situation, but has no individual power over Dracula to stop him. This could be potentially linked to the nature of Britain's colonial ventures and <sup>how</sup> ~~how~~ Dracula is a representation of the power hungry and insatiable British empire. Even though Harker is ~~is~~ believes he is culturally superior to the East due to his condescending voice towards the old ~~old~~ woman ~~and~~ like he says "as an English Churchman, I have been ~~to be~~ taught to regard such things as in some measure idolatrous" and the use of the proper

mans in English Churchmen create ~~an~~ a tone of superiority, but Harker is unable to escape the dominating power that Dracula has and the hunger he has for people. Such like the British Empire had a severe hunger for power and influence over the world. All of his emasculation converts into a breakdown of the ~~female~~ illusion of repression of the Victorian Gentleman when Harker "sat down and simply cried". The emotive verb "cried" creates a crossing of an emotional boundary and emphasizes how Harker resorts to dealing with it. Yet he still retains some of the expected male archetypes of being determined and driven as the exhortatory "Action!" conveys. The emasculation of Harker festers within him and comes to a head when he "cried like a weaned child, whilst he shook with emotion" and that auditory imagery of Harker crying like a child in Mina's arms shows the level to which he has been caused emotional turmoil due to Dracula's imprisonment of him. Shakespeare similarly crosses gender boundaries with Viola ~~the~~ as she must disguise herself in order to gain influence and power in Illyria, which mirrors the patriarchal undertones that Bram Stoker also incorporated in ~~Dracula~~ 'Dracula'. However Viola is affected

emotionally in differing ways to Iago as she instead of breaking down, must delve introspectively within herself in order to navigate her ~~unrequited~~ love for Othello.

The use of the abstract noun in 'O time, thou must unstage this, not I!' offers a perspective in which Viola seeks a higher power in order to solve her problems with her identity and how the crossing of a gender boundary has emotionally affected her. Yet even though her desperation seeks her to pass off responsibility to "time" itself, being a soliloquy it is also a message to herself to possibly muster the courage to reveal herself and profess her love for Othello. The metaphor of the "not" also ~~creates a notion~~ conveys the complexity of unrequited love which is a key theme throughout the play even though how our characters such as Othello is deeply affected by it which also causes him to cross gender boundaries as he is forced to, similar to Viola, be in touch with his emotions and the volatility of them as exemplified through "stealing and giving colour. Enough, no more!". His volatility in emotion due to the crossing of a gender boundary mirrors Iago's emotional volatility in 'Dracula' showing how both characters

-poore and stoker present individuals deeply affected emotionally by the crossing of social boundaries solidified through the use of exclamatory sentences by both Hamlet ~~and Othello~~ and Othello as well as Viola's metaphorical language and voice ~~in~~ all in order to gain emotional stability and solace.

Stoker also creates emotional and physical effects on individuals through the crossing of social norm boundaries and how the characters formed can potentially serve as a cautionary tale or a representation of Victorian fears and worries of ~~societies~~ society's progression. He uses the character of Lucy as a manifestation of what Victorians potentially believe about the new individualistic and promiscuous nature of new ideas of women's role in society. Lucy's promiscuity is evident through when she says "why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her?" This interrogative highlights her hedonistic nature as Lucy is depicted as being sexually free, but also deceptive as she does not just want to ~~be~~ simply be with ~~three~~ three men, she uses the sanctimonious sacrament of marriage in order to display her promiscuity.

Q22 This could potentially ~~the~~ show that Victorian fears as his 'new woman' is able to commit herself to multiple men, ~~as~~ which would strike hard against men's ~~patron~~ patriarchal power and relationship dominance they have ever known in Victorian England. However Lucy is physically and emotionally affected by the crossing of his social boundary as her transformation suggests "Lucy's eyes under and full of hell-fire" the use of biblical and hellish imagery by Stoker is a hyperbolic representation of what the new woman is and the eyes being the window to the soul being described as blazing with "unholy light" subverts the patriarchal notion of the woman being pure and worthy. This is also solidified through the zoomorphic imagery in "she drew back with an angry snarl" she is presented as animalistic and hungry such as Dracula and such as Berfield. This vampirism could be a reference also to Victorian fears of ~~sexually~~ sexually transmitted diseases and how through hedonism and promiscuity emerges a poisonous and deadly disease that feeds on people, just as vampirism in Dracula does. Shakespeare also creates emotional and physical torment through the

crossing of a ~~bandage~~ social norm bandage from the character of Malvolio and how his own characteristics and mannerisms lead to a eventual downfall, just as Lucy's promiscuity lead to her demise. Malvolio portrays an ~~ambitious~~ ambitious mentality that forces him into a self-perceived notion of nobility. He says "To be Count Malvolio" <sup>as</sup> which creates an overly ambitious voice as he is simply a ~~lousy~~ lousy steward, yet he applies his pompous and title of 'Count' in order to further his delusions of what he believes himself to be. The use of ellipsis also creates an ~~ominous~~ ominous fore as Malvolio is willing to sacrifice his dignity in order to achieve his ambitious goals. However to a ~~Shakespeare~~ Elizabethan audience his ~~own~~ ambitious ambitions and grandiose mentality would've been sacrilegious as he would have been frowned upon for actively ~~dis~~ attempting to disrupt the Great Chain of Being, a staple cultural value in Elizabethan England. Yet the use of religious allusion is not just confined to Malvolio's own actions, but also ~~how~~ how others view him. Maria says "The devil a ~~per~~ puritan that he is", puritanism would have been ridiculed due to its radical perspective on patriarchy and this is exemplified through Malvolio as he disrupts festivities by exclaiming "Hare ga

no wit, manners, nor honesty" and the use of the triadic structure creates a condescending and self-righteous manner that he exudes. Yet Shakespeare, similarly to Stoker, shows how this undesirable characteristic leads to a character's demise physically and emotionally. Malvolio's imprisonment is a key example of how crossing that social norm/boundary/boundary leads to destruction and emotional torment. His encounter with Sir Topas, Feste, shows how Shakespeare uses here a biblical allusion to exemplify Malvolio's emotional torment as Feste says "Fie, you dishonest Satan" the attributive of "Satan" ~~shows how~~ conveys how Malvolio's overly ~~ambitious~~ ambitious nature led him to devilish characteristics, yet he still retains his self-righteousness as he says "This house is dark", the adjective dark represents how he believes he has been wronged and that his intellectual superiority still remains even after his imprisonment. Therefore Shakespeare, through the crossing of a social norm/boundary, creates emotional and physical suffering for Malvolio through his ~~gulling~~ gulling and imprisonment to show how sacred the Great Chain of Being is to the Elizabethan English.

In *Cadaveria*, both Stoker and Shakespeare present how individuals go through physical and emotional torment through the crossing of boundaries such as gender which force individuals to deal with how to configure their identities and roles in their respective societies, but also how the failure to adhere to social conventions and the crossing of these boundaries lead to eventual punishment and treat through physical and emotional means.



A delightful answer, eventually.

It begins less impressively, however: on the opening page, the complex sentence structures teeter under the weight of their multiple clauses. Nonetheless, it soon settles into a long, highly detailed discussion of *Dracula* and *Twelfth Night*, paying careful attention to the demands of the question, and regularly ensuring that all four Assessment Objectives are being met.

This response, on *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *North*, illustrates the consequences of neglecting to deploy sufficient technical terminology, from both literary studies and linguistics, to further the analysis of the studied texts.

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 5 ☒ Question 6 ☒

Question 7 ☒ Question 8 ☒

Please write the name of your two studied texts below:

Text 1:

Wide Sargasso Sea

Text 2: North, Seamus Heaney.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the methods used by the writers of your two studied texts to present individuals who are strongly affected, physically and/or emotionally, by the crossing of a boundary.

Throughout both Jean Rhys' "Wide Sargasso Sea" and Seamus Heaney's "North", characters and individuals are strongly affected physically, and also emotionally due to the crossing of boundaries. Throughout both texts, a major theme presented is the erasure of one's identity, due to the crossing of a boundary. Individuals are made ashamed of their true selves, and forced to change themselves either for safety, or for the sake of other people. In Rhys' "Wide Sargasso Sea", the character of Antoinette is renamed by her husband Rochester. In Part Two of the book, Antoinette states, "My name is not Bertha; why do you call me Bertha?". Rochester continues to call Antoinette Bertha, even upon her expressing her discomfort. He crosses her personal boundaries, abusing her, and erasing her identity. ~~to the point~~ Rochester avoids using Antoinette's given name, as it is similar to her mother's name.

Annette, who is not looked upon in a pleasant manner. He erases her past, and also the memory of her mother by calling her Bertha.

~~Hearty, in Heaney's poem, 'The Irishman', the speaker is a Catholic who is being forced to change his name to Bertha. Hearty states, 'And Seamus (call me Sean)'. Seamus is a Catholic name, which he has become fearful of using due to the violence towards Catholics during the Troubles. He is afraid to use his birth-given name, erasing his heritage and also his identity. This is due to the crossing of personal boundaries of the Catholics, who have been invaded by the English.~~

Antoinette goes on to express her discomfort, stating, "Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name." Rochester continues to ignore her, neglecting her of her feelings. "He has found out it was my mother's name", Antoinette states, revealing how Rochester crossing her boundaries has caused her to feel ashamed of herself, of her mother.

Similarly, in Heaney's, "Whatever you say, say nothing",

~~the~~ erasure of identity is caused due to the threats and

pressures of Protestants. In the poem, Heaney states, "And Seamus (call me Sean)..." Seamus is a Catholic name,

which he has become fearful of using due to the violence towards Catholics during the Troubles. He is afraid to use

his birth-given name, erasing his heritage and also his

identity. This is due to the crossing of personal boundaries of the Catholics, who have been invaded by the English.

~~The invasion of Northern Ireland has also invaded the lives of Catholics who are forced to stay quiet, play pretend. The conflict between the Catholics and Protestants is further reflected, when~~

The invasion of Northern Ireland has also invaded the lives of Catholics who are forced to stay quiet, play pretend. The conflict between the Catholics and Protestants is further reflected, when Heaney states, "Religion's never mentioned here". The Catholics

are conditioned to stay quiet about their religion, and their identity, to avoid conflict. The metaphor, "tongues lie coiled", emphasises how they live in silence, unable to speak up for themselves, unable to be proud of who they are, unable to be stable in their identities.

~~Additionally, in Wide Sargasso Sea, we see Antoinette further question her identity, stating, "I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all".~~ Additionally, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, we see Antoinette further question her identity, stating, "I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all". She continues asking herself these questions due to her identity being stripped of her by Rochester, but also through the crossing of racial boundaries. She is neither seen as white or black, as she is often called "white [in word]", and "white cockroach", due to her Creole descent.

She feels as if she does not fit in anywhere, reflecting how the Catholics also did not feel welcome, or safe in their own country. In Heaney's poem, "The Grauballe Man", we see the connection that the Irish hold to their land.

"The metaphor, "the black river of himself", holds strong connotations to nature, using nouns such as "river", when referring to himself. These connotations of nature are shown throughout the entire poem, when Heaney states, "bog oak", "swamp", "mud". Heaney is showing Ireland's strong connection to the land, and how this sense of patriotism can shape their identity. With their land being invaded, they feel as if they lose a part of themselves and

identity, linking back to Antoinette's lack of identity surrounding her heritage. She doesn't feel a connection to her roots or her land anymore. A lack of identity can strongly affect somebody emotionally, however, it can also make someone feel out of place physically.

Throughout both "Wide Sargasso Sea" and "Nath", sexual boundaries are crossed, affecting individuals both physically and emotionally. ~~In Rhys'~~ ~~the~~ "Wide Sargasso Sea", Rochester cheats on Antoinette with Amelie, with Antoinette on the other side of the wall, allowing her to hear what is going on, leaving her with a lot of emotional distress. Antoinette compares herself to Amelie, stating, "Is she so much prettier than I am? Don't you love me at all?" Her self-image is lowered by the crossing of the sexual boundaries in her and Rochester's marriage, when he commits adultery. She feels hurt and betrayed by Rochester due to this, with "murder in her eyes". Her love for him, and for herself, fades away due to the crossing of boundaries. Furthermore, sexual boundaries are also crossed in Heaney's "Bog Queen". The poem is written from the perspective of the bog body of a woman, punished for her adultery. The poem makes a lot of explicit references to body parts, such as, "breasts", "thighs", "pelvis", "stomach and rectum". She is seen in a sexual manner even after her death, creating a sense of discomfort for her. Sexual boundaries are physically crossed through narrowing her

down to simply body parts, instead of a real person with her own thoughts and feelings. She is "barbered and stripped".

These verbs further emulate the crossing of sexual boundaries, and the impact they have had.

To conclude, in both Rhys' "Wide Sargasso Sea", and Heaney's "North", individuals are strongly affected both physically and emotionally due to the crossing of boundaries.

These include personal boundaries, which lead to emotional impacts due to the erasure of one's identity and past, physical boundaries, which can also affect one's identity and also connection to heritage, and lastly, sexual boundaries, which affect individuals both physically and emotionally.



This answer is clearly the work of an able candidate: the writing is fluent and at times elegant; the contexts are entirely relevant; and the comparisons convince. But despite these signs of Level 4 potential, the answer cannot break out of Level 3.

This is, in large part, because all it has to offer in terms of AO1 (the use of lang-lit frameworks) is the identification of two metaphors and two verbs. As a result, it cannot get into Level 4, which is reserved for answers that, in the terms used in the Mark Scheme, exhibit “control” and “discrimination”. By not using enough technical terms, it has suppressed its AO1 achievement, and therefore its AO2 achievement also, and, moreover, delimited opportunities for AO4 comparison also (because it can’t compare how specific linguistic or literary features are used in the two texts). It has, in effect, hit a glass ceiling at the top end of Level 3, because while it is always “clear and relevant”, the hallmarks of Level 3 achievement, it isn’t doing anything more than that.



You must use a range of technical terms and concepts from both linguistics and literary studies to further your answer. This isn’t just a matter of labelling word classes or identifying sentence types or rhetorical features; what earns more substantial reward is analysing how, and why, the author deployed such terms and concepts to achieve specific effects in their texts. Look carefully at exactly what you are required to do for AO1 and AO2!

# Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- In Section A, you should not begin writing until you have a clear sense of the passage's purpose, audience, and genre. A holistic approach to analysis is often preferable to the paragraph-by-paragraph approach. Be sure to read the Introductory heading to the passage carefully: it contains information that is often vital to your full understanding of the text.
- Answers are often enriched when you show a wider understanding of the chosen theme, and are able to apply it relevantly to analysis of the given passage. Do as much extra reading around your theme as possible!
- You must be able to apply language and literature frameworks in both Sections of the exam. Ensure that you deploy appropriate and relevant concepts and terminology from both linguistic and literary study to further the analysis of the two chosen literary texts in Section B.
- Avoid writing answers that merely 'feature spot', or simply label word classes or identify sentence types: analysing how individual features are crafted to create specific effects will earn a higher score, because you'll be achieving for AO1 and AO2 at the same time.
- Ensure that you can discuss a wide variety of contextual materials, and on the day of the exam, use only those which best assist in answering the specific question asked.
- When writing on fiction, poetry and drama, you should display an understanding of the author's craft in shaping the formal qualities of their work: the specifically poetic aspects of poems; plays as texts that are written to be staged in a theatre; novels which have narrators with a voice and an agenda, and who structure their narrations accordingly.
- In Section B, AO4 is rewarded most fully where a variety of comparative structures are deployed. Answers which merely compare using the terms of the question (e.g. 'Another text which discusses social inequality is ...') will obtain some reward for AO4, but there is much higher reward for the following approaches:
  - comparing or contrasting the use of specific literary, linguistic or structural devices;
  - comparing or contrasting specific, relevant aspects of the contexts for the two texts;
  - comparing or contrasting subtle and relevant aspects of characterisation or theme.

## Grade boundaries

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