

Examiners' Report

June 2025

GCE English Literature 9ET0 02

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Introduction

In 2025 examiners were extremely impressed with the overall standard of candidates' work, which showed thoughtful, often sophisticated responses to the questions. These often showed close engagement with wider contextual ideas and issues, and a critical approach to understanding and interpreting the texts studied. Teachers and candidates can be proud of their hard work and the critical, analytical and evaluative skills they have developed in their studies of prose texts.

Candidates whose responses were carefully planned tended to write conceptual essays giving a clear overview of the texts and the ideas their authors were exploring in the novels as a whole. The best responses had clear conceptual arguments which were outlined early on in the essay, then further developed using precise textual evidence and contextual insight.

Some candidates whose essays were less focused often used a rather formulaic approach to writing their introductions, which didn't always directly refer to the question being asked and tended to remain general in character. Introductions driven by the key concept or idea in the question tended to be more successful and helped to drive an interpretation of the texts which led to a more focused essay overall.

Candidates demonstrated a varied and impressive understanding of a range of contextual factors. At best these were used to illuminate readings of the texts, and to thoughtfully probe the authors' messages and ideas about society, social change and human nature. Some candidates would benefit from saying a little more about their contextual points, taking care to link these factors more closely to the interpretation of the texts. For example, to state that 'Victorian society was patriarchal' is less helpful than a more developed discussion such as 'Late Victorian anxieties about women's roles, fuelled by demands from women for greater financial, political and educational freedoms, are reflected in Stoker's presentation of his male characters being emasculated by corrupt and immoral women like the female vampires.'

In general, candidates showed a strong ability to compare texts thoroughly and in a multi-layered way. Connections between the texts were often seamlessly integrated into the fabric of the essays, moving between the two novels with ease. It was usually more effective to start a paragraph or section of the essay with a clear connection before probing the detail of the individual texts. Few answers were seen which did not connect texts, although some did this in a more superficial way, without developing connections through examination of textual details.

Candidates need to consider the balance of AO2 in their answers (AO2 assesses candidates' analysis of the ways in which writers craft and shape meanings in their texts). Many demonstrated good knowledge of plot, theme and character, and could discuss contextual factors but struggled to link these to precise textual details or aspects of the writer's craft, in some cases making only minimal reference to the texts themselves. It is important that candidates support assertions and interpretations with evidence from the texts and keep the literary work at the heart of their responses.

Question 1

Question 1 asked about the presentation of injustice. This was approached from varied angles, often considering aspects of racial, gender, economic and class-based injustice. Candidates considered unjust actions and incidents, as well as the effects of injustice on innocent individuals and the consequences it could have on characters' story arcs. There was discussion of individual, societal and institutional injustices, often making thoughtful links to wider contexts. A number of candidates discussed the justice (or otherwise) of the texts' endings, noting that perpetrators of injustice often escaped punishment while the victims of injustice were often left unacknowledged or without any restitution. Others considered writers' intentions in giving a voice to those who suffered injustice in society.

Answers which focused entirely on characters who experienced injustice often struggled to develop their points beyond basic plot to consider the wider message of the writers. Those who incorporated ideas about authors' social commentary or their philosophical or political beliefs were able to extend their answers beyond individual examples and put forward more cohesive overall arguments.

This response on *What Maisie Knew* and *The Color Purple* was placed at the lower end of Level 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 ☒ Question 5 ☒ Question 6 ☒
Question 7 ☒ Question 8 ☒ Question 9 ☒
Question 10 ☒ Question 11 ☒ Question 12 ☒

Please write the titles of your chosen texts below:

Text 1: The Color Purple

Text 2: What Maisie Knew

What Maisie Knew, by Henry James, was written in 1897, close to the 'Fin de siècle', a time of great change before the new century. James observed a society he believed to be decadent, obsessed with the ^{idea} of sex, and one in which divorce and adultery were overly normalised. What Maisie Knew is his examination of this Victorian Society in which children face many injustices such as neglect, abandonment and the loss of their family. The Color Purple by Alice Walker was written in 1983, in the aftermath of the African American civil Rights movement. Walker depicts the racial, sexual and violent injustices black women faced, especially in the American South, while the ~~fast~~ success of the Civil Rights outbreak gives her work a great optimism for the possibility to ~~new~~ develop self confidence and autonomy.

in the face of injustice. Thus, Walker's outlook differs greatly in terms of optimism from James.

The novels also focus on the injustices of neglect and abuse. Marsie is unwanted by her parents, and receives very little attention. James depicts her as being very angry, especially with Sir Claude, showing ~~that~~ the new attitude that the abuse of parenthood has caused, writing 'I love Sir Claude - I love him'. The repeated insistence conveys her desperation for familial love. Additionally, we see how verbal abuse has deeply set into Marsie's subconscious. James depicts a scene where Marsie snaps at her doll Lizzie during a tantrum, yet Marsie 'felt ashamed afterwards and rather reminded herself of mother.' James uses this scene to critique the cycles of abuse ~~that~~ that absent and angry parents inflict on their children ~~who~~ which unfairly afflict the innocent young. Celie also experiences neglect. At Albert's house, she is completely cut off from family, saying 'I don't feel nothing no more.' The effect on the reader is heart-breaking, with such a young child experiencing a dissociative mental health disorder. However, the two novels contrast with context in their depiction of abuse, as Marsie is in the upper

class of Victorian society and faces many legal
 protections. Cole, however, experiences institutional
 racism in a society where black families were
 denied less attention by law enforcement. Walker
 depicts harrowing sexual abuse, writing 'He put
 his thing against my hip and sort of
 wriggled it around.' The term 'his thing' describes
 her confusion at what is happening, conveying
 how young ~~and~~ she really is. Additionally, physical
 abuse is common in her life, with Albert
 saying 'I beat her... Celia she's my wife.' Thus,
 Walker depicts the injustices of a society that
 does not give attention to sexual crimes committed
 within the family, nor violence in a repressive
 home for female children.



The introduction of this Level 4 essay closely links relevant contexts to the texts and how they can be interpreted overall. The candidate goes on to examine specific instances of injustice, in this section comparing the unjust neglect and abuse faced by children in the two novels.

This is a very well integrated response, connecting and comparing, frequently referring to contexts, and analysing AO2 features in detail.



It can be very useful to highlight key connections and contextual influences in your

introduction.

This essay on *Hard Times* and *The Color Purple* was awarded a high Level 5 mark.

1840s England. Louisa's struggles, especially her May-to-December marriage with Mr Bantley, are overwriten and hidden by the self-interested patriarchal figures of power in her life, who Dickens mixes with his overtly mocking ~~hetero~~ heterodiegetic ~~and~~ political commentary. Similarly, in "The Color Purple", Alice Walker demonstrates the continuation of unjust treatment towards women in both the 1920s-30s and the 1980s through Celie's personal, homodiegetic response to the treatment she receives. ~~When~~ ^{Watts} ~~Alphonse~~ ~~gives her away to Mr,~~ Walker's use of the honorific "Mr" followed by a lacuna, for the character of Albert, demonstrates Celie's own recognition of the imbalance in their relationship as she only addresses him using a honorific and for most of the novel, he remains nameless, simply a tyrannical figure of ~~dom~~ the patriarchal domestic structure. This imbalance is further emphasised by Walker's use of the "cow" metaphor in relation to Celie when she is given away to Mr. The epithet "cow" is often used to demean women, and the metaphor of a domesticated livestock animal in relation to a woman entering into marriage is profoundly revealing; ~~as that~~ Walker uses this metaphor to demonstrate ~~to~~ the attitudes of men and the whole of society towards a woman's role in marriage in both the sharecropping era and the 1980s, in that a

woman's role is to work, and Walker's ^{understanding of this} ~~criticism~~ highlights her own "womanist" critique on society as a whole, especially in its attitude towards black women. This criticism of the imbalance of treatment between men and women is very similar to Dickens', but Walker uses a homodiegetic narrator to add to the verisimilitude of the criticism ~~and~~ instead of an intrusive one.

Both ~~novels~~ ~~are~~ ~~present~~ ~~injustice~~ ~~through~~ ~~the~~ ~~depiction~~ ~~of~~ ~~lower~~ ~~class~~ ~~characters~~, and use these depictions to demonstrate the unjust treatment that real-life ~~equivalent~~ ~~experiences~~ receive. In "The Color Purple", race, gender and class combine to demonstrate Walker's views on the intersectionality of identities, and especially through the characters of Celie and Sofia. Both characters use African American Vernacular English (AAVE) which Walker uses to denote their class, and the reactions that both characters receive when speaking demonstrates the connection between classism and racism in 1920s America and its reflection in the 1980s, when Alice Walker wrote her novel. Sofia's Sofia and Celie's recognition of the number of people that have ~~to~~ given them unjust treatment as "too many to kill off" ~~is~~ ~~also~~ highlights the tragic nature of being a poor, black woman in the American South.

This monosyllabic statement carries a harsh sense of finality, especially when coupled with Celie's statement "Us outnumbered from the start". The non-standard ~~low~~ English of "us" highlights the importance of class in the less favorable treatment both Celie and Sofia received, and ~~was~~ the dual focalizing characters of Celie and Nettie, one ~~speaking~~ writing is AAVE and the other in standard English emphasises the disparity in treatment due to class. Similarly, Dickens uses the character of Stephen, who also speaks in non-standard English to denote his class, to demonstrate the negative impact of laissez-faire economics on the working class. Stephen's constant refrain of "it's a muddle" is a euphemistic mention of the difficulties in his life that he receives no help with due to the self-interested ideas of industrial ~~capital~~ capitalism. ~~Furthermore, the physical depiction of Stephen as "hooked" demonstrates~~ Furthermore, the synecdoche of "Hands" for Stephen and the working class highlights the way that they are viewed by Boudsby and the other factory ~~owners~~ ^{owners}; a Victorian portrayal of the way that the working class are treated poorly and dehumanised by the rapidly industrialising early-to-mid Victorian world. ~~In contrast, Sylvia~~ ~~Walker~~ ^{Sylvia} Walker shows the dehumanisation of workers due to industrialisation in

a similar way: the Oluka's village being "gated" by the road, a symbol of industrialisation and colonialism, ~~is~~ highlights the Euro-centric view of industrialisation - the Oluka became workers as soon as the road is built, despite the land being ~~her~~ historically theirs. This removal of personhood in both "Hard Times" and "The Color Purple" demonstrates the ~~an~~ injustice faced by workers and lower class individuals.



This is part of an excellent Level 5 essay, which seamlessly develops different lines of argument, comparing first gender-based injustice, and then moving on to consider injustice based on social class. Arguments are developed in great detail, with close analysis of both texts and well-integrated connections made throughout.

This response on *What Maisie Knew* and *Atonement* was given a mark at the lower end of Level 3.

Both chosen texts have a underlying theme of injustice. What *Maisie Knew*, by Henry James describes the injustice experienced by a young girl as a result of her parents divorce, and the subsequent experiences she lives through. ~~On the~~ This story is set in Victorian England, where divorce was rare, but was becoming more popular at the time the story was set, ~~the late~~ 1890s. However the main concern was the welfare of the children involved in the divorces. In the case of *Maisie*, ~~she was~~ the courts ordered that ~~she~~ her time be split between both parents, six months at a time. This is where the injustices towards *Maisie* begins to grow.

On the other hand *Atonement*, by Ian McEwan, describes an injustice of a different type. An injustice that was the result of ~~a~~ the misunderstanding and misinterpretations of a young girls mind, Briony Tallis. Which then impacted on the lives of others, namely her sister Cecilia Tallis and ~~the~~ Robbie Turner.

The story is set across a number of decades ~~and~~ and tells the story from a number of perspectives. The story begins in 1935 where Briony commits "her crime" of accusing Robbie of a terrible assault which ruins his life and the newly formed relationship between Robbie and Cecilia. The story follows what comes next for the characters and how the injustice has affected their lives.

The initial comparison is that, ^{with} both books our main characters are young girls. Both with a naivety of not understanding the world around them especially the adults. However to a vast extent this is where our similarities between Maisie and Briony ends. Maisie is the victim of injustice in what Maisie knew and Briony is presented as the perpetrator of the injustice in *Attenement*.

When Maisie's parents divorce she is thrown into an uncertain world, she must spend ~~6~~ six months with each parent. Unfortunately Maisie's parents are more

Concerned about their own petty squabbles rather than the welfare of their child. They use Maisie to ferry message between them, insults in the main. It becomes like a game and Maisie is the pawn. At one point she is described as a "little feathered shuttlecock", ~~being~~ implying she is being batted from side to side. Although young (Maisie was only six at the time of the divorce) she does find a way to deal with the situation, she plays on her innocence and plays dumb. When asked questions she simply acts as if she doesn't know. This is her way of protecting herself as her parent don't seem to.

With *Atonement*, the naivety and inexperience of Briony is present at the way she interprets what she sees, ~~hears~~ hears and reads. She ~~see's~~ ~~and~~ interaction between her sister, Cecilia and Robbie and assumes there is something sinister going on. Cecilia strips down to her underwear and steps into a fountain, while Robbie stands and

watches, however what we find out later is that a vase has been broken and Cecilia is simply retrieving the pieces while Robbie stands in shock at what Cecilia is doing. Briony assumes that Robbie has ordered her to do this. Her next misinterpretation comes when she intercepts a letter from Robbie to Cecilia in which he uses an obscene word. Briony is understandably shocked by this term and along with her cousin Lola decide that Robbie is some sort of "Monster" or "Maniac". ~~This~~ This is the starting point of Briony's injustice against Robbie. ~~She ends up having~~ Briony builds this image of Robbie in her mind, so when an incident occurs when Lola is sexually attacked, she can think of no-body else but Robbie to accuse. Lola does not dispute this, she lets Briony run with her thoughts. Briony presents as mature, by the way she is trying to take control of ~~the~~ the situation, however it is the ~~over~~ ~~active~~ misinterpretations of a young girl.



This Level 3 response shows good knowledge of the texts studied, but is quite factual in its approach, commenting on plot and character. There is a clear focus on injustice, and sensible comparisons of Maisie and Briony (as victim/perpetrator of injustice) but the answer could have reached the next level of the mark scheme had it broadened the scope of the argument to consider the writers' overall ideas about injustice in the novels.



Rather than describing what happens in the novels, try to analyse **how** the writer has constructed these events and what meanings are being explored

Question 2

Question 2 asked about the presentation of characters who could be considered in some way flawed. This question was phrased so as to encourage candidates to consider a broad range of characters who might be interpreted as flawed. The best responses were able to pinpoint these 'flaws' exactly and specifically, with a number of candidates considering flawed characters in the light of the tragic hero. There was discussion of whether such flaws were the result of wider societal issues (for example one essay discussed the flaws of Mr _ in *The Color Purple* and Gradgrind in *Hard Times* as a result of being victims of oppression, or inflexibility in their beliefs, and as passing this oppression on to others as an attempt to regain power, resulting in generational flaws). Many candidates discussed the impact of flawed fathers or parents, particularly on the lives of women and daughters. Sometimes this became slightly oversimplified into points on the problems with the male characters in the novels, while more nuanced answers considered the flaws of protagonists as well, for example Briony's inability to atone for her childhood actions in *Atonement*, or Celie's normalisation of violence against women in her advice to Harpo in *The Color Purple*.

This response on *Hard Times* and *The Color Purple* was placed on the border between Levels 4 and 5.

In addition to this, both novels use religious imagery to ~~emphasise~~ further convey to the reader the consequences flawed characters may face as a result of their actions, reflecting the ~~attenuation~~ consequences of society. In *Hard Times* Dickens presents Stephen a Blackpool as an embodiment of the working class, "Thou hast been a cruel sufferer, Heaven reward thee." He is a victim of the subjugation caused by the utilitarian society, and is thus destined to

remain ~~the~~ ~~perpetrator~~ unhappy unwarded. Thus Rachael's use of the word 'Heaven' in the quote above is ironic as ~~she~~ ~~and~~ Dickens presents her as the catalyst for Stephen's downfall and eventual death in "old hell shaft." Stephen desired pleasure, something he was not naturally presented with - similar to Shug's behaviour throughout ~~the~~ 'The color purple', and thus faced the consequences of even considering an affair. Dickens uses the juxtaposition between the words 'Heaven' and 'hell' to allude to the divorce laws implemented in the UK in 1857. Divorce was legal, but only with a bill of parliament - something only wealthy people could acquire. ~~Stephen was not~~ ~~a~~ Dickens thus criticises this as it proposes that Stephen was not eligible for divorce, and thus he must be punished by going to hell. In 'The color purple', divorce is a less taboo topic, but ~~relationships~~ ~~as a~~ whole are reflective of Walker's attitudes towards marriage and raising children. Women marry each other's husbands, and raise each other's children as ~~there is no personal~~ ~~love~~ ~~does not dictate relationships.~~ "He

through a rock at my head, and it bled, and it bled, and it bled," Walker has a tempestuous relationship with her own daughter and thus reflects this onto Celie and her relationship with Mr. — and Harpo. The word anaphora of the word 'bled', ~~etc.~~ is symbolic of Celie's attitudes towards her husband and step-son; the blood - symbolic of abuse - continues pouring out just as the abuse will continue to ~~occur~~ occur. It could also be argued that Dickens portrayal of ~~step~~ Stephen's affair is reflective of his own, thus ~~partly~~ explaining why he criticises divorce laws. Both novels are perhaps using the writers own flaws to criticise society and make their opinions more socially acceptable.

Whilst both 'Hard Times', and 'The color purple' use flawed characters to express their attitudes towards societal matters in similar ways, their fundamental reasoning behind why they do it is different. Dickens, who is overly critical towards the education system similar to Alice Walker, expresses his concerns towards fact-based learning through

the names of each book, 'sowing, gardening and reaping.' Each title acts as a metaphorical reminder of information being planted into children to create submissive members of the workplace. Despite this, Dickens is not against capitalism. Whilst he does have a tempestuous relationship with workhouses, after having briefly worked in one at the age of 12, he is not completely opposed to them. Instead he uses juxtaposition between *Sissy* and *Havisa* to convey his true issues with society - the people are being brainwashed and women are no longer ~~passively~~ being seen as 'The angel in the house' as proposed by Gertrude Patmore. The cult of domesticity and coverture is declining, and *Havisa* in fact acts as a symbol for the punishment that is occurring as a result, "And she saw her self as a mother, though that was never to be." Utilitarianism ~~desperately~~ attempts to ~~conceal conceal~~ conceal the power imbalance between men and women. In 'The color purple', Walker does not convey this societal shift. Whilst the characters do become more profound and caring for each other towards the end of the novel,

through religious imagery and Walker's reflection of pantheism onto the novel, "Dear God. Dear stars, dear trees, dear sky, dear peoples. Dear everything." Walker ultimately aims to express her idea of womanism and highlight the fact that despite a 60 year difference between the book being written, and the book being set, ~~Women~~ Black women are still being treated fairly similarly. The repetition of the phrase 'Dear God' throughout the novel is perhaps suggestive of the isolation women endure at the hands of men. "You ain't tell nobody but God" E Walker. One who would have only just been able to open her own bank account is trying to express that Black women are still being suppressed globally. This is reflective of the idea of Coverture in hard times.

Ultimately, both Charles Dickens, and Alice Walker use their novels to express their attitudes towards society and attempt to teach people to be more accepting through the presentations of flawed characters. These characters are

Constructed in direct response to these issues and thus their flaws can only be attributed to society and the flaws it withstands. They both attempt to induce societal change to benefit themselves but for different reasons.



This essay is a great example of an argument which builds to a strong overall conclusion, that society is responsible for the flaws of characters, and that the writers are trying to elicit compassion even for those who are flawed.



Planning your essay carefully helps you to think about what overall point you are building up to. Knowing your end-point before you start to write helps to make your essay more coherent.

Question 3

Question 3 asked about the presentation of characters who are disillusioned with society.

It was good to see a wide range of responses to the relatively new text in this thematic grouping, *Home Fire*. Many candidates made thoughtful comments on the intertextual link between *Home Fire* and *Antigone*, often accompanied by detailed discussion of political and cultural contexts and Shamsie's commentary on issues in contemporary society.

There were some very good responses looking at disillusionment in *The Lonely Londoners*, exploring the mismatch between expectations and reality for Windrush migrants who were invited to England to enjoy freedom and riches in recognition of their contributions to the war effort, but on arrival faced an unwelcoming society where their skills were not recognised, and they were not offered employment. Galahad's struggle with internalised racism was often analysed as a key moment of disillusionment.

Some candidates struggled to clearly define 'disillusionment', resulting in essays which discussed aspects of suffering or racial inequality without making explicit the links between these and the theme in the question. Weaker responses tended to focus on the experiences and ideas of characters, while stronger answers broadened this out to include societal and authorial disillusionment with colonialism and its impact, or explored ways in which characters' disillusionment developed across the whole text rather than isolated incidents or examples. Others focused on the causes of disillusionment, fruitfully considering violence, alienation and psychological oppression.

This extract from an essay on *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Heart of Darkness* was placed at the lower end of Level 5.

Within *Huckleberry Finn* and *Heart of Darkness* (H.O.D), both writers present numerous characters as disillusioned within their societies to explore the contrast between reality and deception. From the outset, the protagonists are presented as disillusioned due to the emergence of the Antebellum south in *Huckleberry Finn* and King Leopold II's "Civilising mission" of the Congo in the late 19th century. Whilst women are foregrounded as characters that are blissfully unaware of the corruption that occurs within society, characters that you would expect to be disillusioned as a result of harsh societal stereotypes ^{against black people} are the characters who ^{are} disillusioned as a result. ^{of disillusion} are more and more liberated as a result.

From the outset of both texts, both protagonists struggle with their perception of society, so they are presented as disillusioned to a certain extent. In *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain presents Huck as a young white boy who as a result has been heavily influenced by the racist southern Antebellum society; in an exchange with the Duke who manipulates others for his own gain Huck states that 'Kings is kings and you got to make allowances'. Not only does Huck's incorrect grammar convey his lack of education but his use of hyperbole through 'kings is kings' establishes a clear hierarchy that ^{he believed} ~~was~~ present in society; through the normalised corruption that he had been exposed to in the deep south growing up, this results in Huck thinking that the Duke's actions of

manipulating others in society for his own gain is acceptable, which therefore makes him disillusioned. During the antebellum period pre-civil war, allowances were made for upper class white people in society due to their race being supposedly superior to black people. However, this social construct was implemented amongst all age groups in the south and so Huck's own views of corruption become tainted, resulting in him having a disillusioned perception of southern society. Furthermore, Huck's entrance into the Grangerford's household foregrounds his admirable nature towards the Grangerfords; his use of ~~an~~ polysyndetic listing through describing the 'peaches and apples and oranges' conveys his impressed tone whilst his depiction of the 'Washington and Lafayette' paintings establishes that the family advocates strong American Independence throughout their home. As Huck focuses on these details throughout this passage, it is clear that he has become fixated on this admirable and archetypal southern family. However, Huck can be seen to be disillusioned due to this as in reality the 'old man owned over a hundred [slaves]' and so their perceived morality is in fact corrupted by their ownership of slaves. Nonetheless, Huck still sustains an optimistic tone, suggesting that the Grangerfords' moral facade has disillusioned him. Similarly, Conrad's presentation of Marlow when he experiences new and contrasting settings

shows how he is somewhat disillusioned by European society. When depicting the Thames, Marlow depicts it as a 'brooding gloom in the sunshine' which in itself provides sinister connotations yet the contrast with 'sunshine' suggests that Marlow is hopeful in the Europeans' civilising pursuit. Essentially, Marlow views the Thames as a vessel to European civilisation success as lead by King Leopold II at the time in the 'Congo Free State', yet it is somewhat ironic that Marlow would be hopeful about a mission, which in reality consisted of the brutal exploitation of innocent natives. Whilst in the Congo, Marlow describes his participation in Kurtz's pursuit as 'high and just proceedings', which on one hand can be argued that Marlow is being sarcastic yet on the other hand, Conrad could be instilling his own personal viewpoint, having experienced the Congo for a four month period himself. This as a result presents the exploitative Congo mission as glorified and like Hecata, Marlow becomes corrupted by Kurtz's beliefs. All in all, both writers use the corruption that occurs within both societies as a catalyst in which both protagonists are corrupted and so experience disillusionment as a result.



This essay opens by interrogating what is meant by disillusionment, considering the mismatch between expectation and reality, and focusing on the corruption at the heart of the societies being depicted. It then ranges widely, considering a thoughtful set of contextual factors and closely linking these to the idea of disillusionment. The candidate shows excellent knowledge of the texts, choosing multiple examples and characters to

exemplify their ideas.



When there are different ways you could approach a topic, it is useful to be clear in your introduction about how you have interpreted the key word, in this case 'disillusionment'.

This essay on *Home Fire* and *Heart of Darkness* was placed at the top end of Level 5.

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

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

Please write the titles of your chosen texts below:

Text 1:

Heart of Darkness

- Aeneas Grief vs Melan
- Luke vs Parvaz
- Psychological impacts
of it?

Text 2:

Home Fire

Home Fire (H.F.) is a novel written by Kamila Shamsie drawing from the 1914-18 Antwerp structure, joining the heroic trope and deep moral debate. Heart of Darkness is written in 1899 following the horrors of the Belgian Congo between 1885 and 1908. Both authors present a multifaceted presentation of Society and Singapore / disillusioned with said Society following colonialism.

In Heart of Darkness (H.O.D.) one first disillusionment from Society comes from the complete degradation of any moral values and from Luke, whereas, in Home Fire, Parvaz disillusionment from Society comes from a deeply thought out rationalisation causing disillusionment from British Society, both texts use ^{inhuman} suffering and distort the temporary abandonment of societal norms in their presentations.

In Home Fire, as aforementioned, this is passed through Parnis's complete radicalization. As an Ombudsman of Children Swedish study articulates a heavy target of ISIS for radicalization was a sense of masculine gender and a lack of a father figure in a man's life. This becomes vital in Sharine's depiction of Parnis's growing disillusionment from the British State. ~~Following the radicalisation process through~~ the torture of Parnis being ~~what is~~ eloquently described by Sharine as like 'Scorpions made of fire were under his skin, going to escape' utilizing the metaphor of the scorpions vicious depictions of the man 'Scorpion' and the acetic imagery of 'going to escape' depicting a personification like presentation of the rulebook inscribed within the torture. Following, this sense of the radicalization Sharine also uses Free Indirect Discourse with the depictions of Parnis's ultimate feelings of disillusionment from the state in the line 'So this was how it felt to have a nation that walked to Suez on your behalf' where the Synchronic of 'nation' arguably represents the power and heroism of the Caliphate. This depicting Farooq's success in just turning Parnis from the British State state, an ultimate disillusionment.

In H.O.D this disillusionment from Society comes through the absence of any reality and status quo embodied by the life of hunk. This depiction of

narcissistic ^{chauvinist} chauvinism can be paralleled with Nietzschean philosophy via his book 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra' in 1883 depicting an 'Ukranian' a man who had created his own morality due to the 'death of God'. This complete disillusionment from Society can be pertinently depicted in the depiction of Luke's Cabin. On the way to meeting Luke Malan states 'Mr Luke's remarks had ruined the district.' Following the ambiguous phrase with the warning of a congregation 'but I want you to clearly understand that there was nothing exactly profitable about those heads being there' where Luke cannot write the extremely positive statement regarding Luke's house surrounded by heads of the Agriens via an informal, colloquial tone of 'I want you clearly to understand' about brooding stipulate and depicting the distress in such a vile depiction of the Cabin of Luke. During the violent extermination of death from the Congo by the King Leopold II and his Force Publique, it is estimated 10 million Congolese were killed and this abuse of morality perfectly depicts a disillusionment from Society accepting such barbaric customs.

Home Fire and Heart of Darkness similarly present a disillusionment from Society due to the horrors experienced by their very antagonistic characters. In HOD, Malan begins to question the ethics of Society

in allowing such horror to occur whereas in Home Fire, Anarcha is a victim of the a society where racial prejudice following the wake of 9/11 was ultimately catastrophic to her and her family. In H.S.D, Molas becomes disillusioned with the horrors of Society upon first experiencing the realities of living amongst Congo Free State. Joseph Conrad visited the Congo in 1890 and alot of these vivid descriptions come from first-hand journal experience that ultimately started Conrad for life. We are presented The Grave of Death almost immediately upon landing in Congo, described as a 'gloomy, pretending, work-eyed devil of opinions and pitiless gally' where Conrad uses short trunc truncated syntax to perpetuate a staccato rhythm that emphasises the corruption of hypocrisy, waste and brutality, with the key intention of exposing the horrors of such a place. Furthermore, Conrads description of the Molas stepping into a 'gloomy Circle of Sore Imguo' is clearly drawing parallels to Italian Poet Dante and his description of 'Inferno' as being one of the circles of hell, further presenting the extreme Socratic of malice thus depicting an extreme disillusionment of your Society due to its ability to produce such brutality. In H.F the, principally Anarcha the disillusionment is far more emotionally presented. Following the death of her brother and the consequent grief. She shows, a clear

of his own actions. In H.F upon arriving in Syria, Raqqa, the Prince soon realises the horrors of ISIS rule. Sharvie shows upon presentations and media reports inside Raqqa when depicting the heads of every soldiers mounted on spiked poles - using soft hand media reports in aiding the creative imagery through adjective like 'spiked' to depict a vivid sensory image of the mistake Prince has truly made. This realisation upon of his mistake upon disillusioning himself from Britain towards ISIS is notable in the free individual desire and the absence of discourse markers when the Sharvie presents his psychological dilemma. Sharvie writes 'It would have been stupid to say he thought he'd been brought to the this house because this was where he was going to live right away. UnMuslim to say he didn't want to go to Sharieh camp, cowardly to say he didn't want military training' when she writes the asymptotic list of regrets and the psychological challenges to larger the daunting reduction of the consequences of his disillusionment from British Society, thus sharing a ~~more~~ account of complete ~~loss~~ doubt of his future in this new society and the psychological impacts of really wanting to return home. In H.O.D the psychological breakdown of Malou due to his growing disillusionment from society is far more structural and thus conveying appeal for the reader, a deliberate purpose of Conrad in depicting the more

Mr. Lantz. Following the Darwinian theory of evolution, Victorian's began interpreting a potential for de-evolution. Here, Conrad plays with this idea following Marlow's growing disillusionment for the Society. Both texts present a kind of psychological degeneration due to growing disillusionment from Society in their key characters who are ~~subject to oppression~~ exposed to the violent extremities of Congo or Rango.

In Conrad's *Conquest*, both texts closely follow a growing disillusionment with Society in their central characters as embarking upon their respective journeys and the effect of societal norms or the status quo upon said journeys. In H.F. Sorensen offers a far more literal and clear sense of Parzifal's disillusionment for Britain and then ISIS with Aeneas experiencing the stark effects of said disillusionment whereas in H.O.D., Conrad offers a gradual expose of the horrors of King Leopold's regime depicting a slow sense of moral or disillusionment for Society throughout inevitably causing psychological deterioration consequent to that forgotten expose by Joseph Conrad. Conrad himself upon returning suggested from moral distress possibly conceiving such effects of the experience within the growing disillusionment from Society of Conrad travelling deep into the 'Heart of Darkness'.



In this essay, the candidate uses connections between characters to anchor their essay, initially comparing disillusionment and moral degradation of Parvaiz and Kurtz, then disillusionment of characters who witness horrors such as Marlow and Aneeka, and finally the psychological struggles faced by characters as leading to disillusionment.

Rather than only focusing on characters however, the candidate connects characters to broader societal contexts and ideas, including an impressive range of contextual information. They are also extremely adept at analysing and evaluating the meanings created through the use of particular narrative methods, exploring narrative voices, structure, symbolism, syntactical choices, and close lexical analysis among others.

This essay is a great example of how close, detailed AO2 analysis can be integrated into your arguments.



If you choose to focus your connections on characters, remember to connect them to the overall theme and consider how they can be linked to contextual factors.

Question 4

Question 4 asked candidates to consider the use of symbolism in their texts. The question encouraged a close focus on AO2, with the strongest answers making connections between examples of symbolism and their meanings and the wider issues and ideas being explored in the texts. Many candidates included successful discussions of symbolic settings, journeys, and features such as light, water and rivers.

There were very varied approaches to identifying and comparing symbolic meanings for this question: one candidate compared the symbolic use of Greek myths in *Home Fire* and *Heart of Darkness*, with a detailed discussion of the use of the Icarus-like parachutist and the women knitting as symbolic of the Fates, as well as the authors' use of colour imagery. Another thoughtfully discussed the symbols used to demonstrate the exploitation of the natives in *Heart of Darkness* and the immigrants in *The Lonely Londoners*, making connections between both texts to Dante's *Inferno*. Another candidate wrote successfully about religious symbolism in *Heart of Darkness* and *The Lonely Londoners*.

Less well developed answers sometimes resorted to listing examples of symbolism in the texts without considering the meanings writers were creating through these symbols. This tended to lead to a rather surface level analysis of the texts, often struggling to connect the symbols to wider contexts or to formulate a sustained argument.

This essay on *Home Fire* and *Heart of Darkness* was placed in Level 5.

Text 1:

Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad

Text 2:

Home Fire, Kamila Shamsie

The use of symbolism in Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad, and Home Fire by Kamila Shamsie can be argued as ~~representing~~ reflecting the sociocultural and political issues in the novel. This is primarily done to show the way in which exploitation of minority groups has continued throughout history, as well as how majority social groups are hesitant to take responsibility for any prejudice shown.

One way in which symbolism is both similarly used by the novels is through a shared motif of death. However, while Heart of Darkness uses this symbolism to highlight the savagery of Kurtz in the Congo, Home Fire uses it as a sense of retaliation against the ~~state~~ British state. In Heart of Darkness, Conrad through Marlow describes how Kurtz had adored the outside of him

but with the severed head's of natives in "it was black, dead, sunken, with closed eyelids [...] smiling continuously at some endless and joyous dream of that eternal slumber". The imagery of decay described here by Conrad not only emphasises the lack of dignity and civilisation that Kurtz possesses, but also how Kurtz was inclined to make an example of the lesser - minded Congolese in his pursuit to find nirvana. The theme of madness is also evident in the sadistic tone in which the metaphor is described, which may show how, through the head, madness is one of the first signs of long - time exposure to the Congo, and (and civilisation and its consequences) and that it is so deadly that it also spreads to the victims of the violence. The motif of death in "endless and joyous dream of that eternal slumber" emphasises how Kurtz, although he butchered his native, was able to find some peace in death, which is ironic considering the way traumatised way in which Kurtz dies. The severed head serves as a physical personification of Kurtz's sin in the Congo, and the way in which they were also "food for [...] the multure" shows how Kurtz may be trying to rid himself from these sins by letting the multure eat away at the head. This treatment of the natives is significant as critics have argued that Conrad based the character of Kurtz on an amalgamation of four men. One of these

men now hear Ram, a Belgian whom we described as decorating his garden in the Congo with a multitude of heads of the Congolese natives. This parallel between Conrad's characterization of Kurtz and the contextual information of Ram shows how there is a racist continuity through majority groups treating minority groups as objects rather than people. This use of dehumanisation and objectification shows the lack of care majority groups had for the marginalised, as with the severed heads in *Heart of Darkness*.

Shamsie's novel 'Home Fire', on the other hand, uses this same motif to ~~portray~~ shame the British institutions for its treatment of the marginalised, as the Home Secretary Karamat refused to allow the body of Panair back into Britain. This is done through the symbolism of Panair's corpse, which is shown in how Aneeka's^{on} hand "moved down to the corpse's wrist, two fingers pressed against what would have been a pulse point". The sombre tone of this quote emphasises the inevitability of Panair coming back to life, but also the way in which Aneeka is now abandoned without her twin in life. The symbolism behind the "pulse point" brings forth a sense of irony - while in death, Panair is neglected by the British state, while in life he is largely ignored by his family, particularly surrounding his

radicalisation. This sentiment is not shown in *Heart of Darkness*, as the natives are largely seen by the white colonialists as objects to display their success and to exploit to satisfy their greed. This description of Pansai in death, on the other hand, shows the true tragedy of his death, unlike Kurtz's severed head which are a warning to those whom may come across Kurtz. Shammie also uses juxtaposition later in her novel through Karamat in "He [Karamat] touched the vein in his neck, felt the reassuring warmth of his own blood". The imagery of anatomy and life described here alongside the repetition of the symbolism of the body characterises Karamat as a calm leader, but one that feels threatened by the sociopolitical issues happening. The way in which Karamat's "blood" and its reminder has to calm him down shows how the symbolism of Pansai's body is not only affecting him emotionally, but physically also. The imagery shown here by Shammie through this also reinforces the theme of family, as "blood" is the thing that unites individuals and gives them life, unlike the overbearing presence of the British state. This contrasts against the symbolism behind the dead natives in *Heart of Darkness*, as the white colonialists are not held up to the same human decency in their expectations by others, as the Congo largely is shown to be a personification of secrets.

and manipulation by Marlow. Kurtz is not remorseful of his actions, whereas Karamaz is inferred to be, signalling how the ~~war~~ state in Home Fire is more open to empathy and progress than the oppressive white colonialists. Where Kurtz is trying to limit physical intimidation, Karamaz is trying to limit social intimidation. The parallel between the foil of Pansy's body and Karamaz's life can be seen as a direct parallel to the context of the tragedy, Antigone (written by Sophocles) that Shamsie based her novel on. This shows the way in which, despite Creon (the character in Antigone that parallels Karamaz) is not considerate of the rights of burial that belong to Polydora (the character of Pansy), creates an irony. Although both Karamaz and Creon attempt to show the importance of maintaining the state, the symbolism of Pansy's and Polydora's bodies only foreshadow the later death of other characters.



The candidate begins by considering why the authors are using symbolism, then explores in detail how symbols are used in the texts. There are interesting and original comparisons of the symbolism of bodies and death, with close attention paid to alternative interpretations and meanings. The focus is very precise, writing a lot about specific details in the bigger symbols identified.

This response on *Heart of Darkness* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was placed at the top end of Level 4.

Text 1:

Heart of Darkness

Text 2:

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn ('Huck Finn')

Both authors of 'Heart of Darkness' and 'Huck Finn' use symbolism as a powerful tool to explore ideas that were suppressed by their respective societies, for instance the negative effects of colonialism. ~~In a racist, deep~~
~~South America.~~

In 'Heart of Darkness', Conrad makes use of many symbols to show the corruption of colonial rule. For instance, Marlow describes a painting of "small sketch in oils, ... representative of a woman, draped and blindfolded, carrying a lighted torch". Ostensibly, to a jingoistic audience of

19th century Europe, the imagery of the 'lighted torch' could represent the spreading of enlightenment that colonialist powers claimed to do. However, the As such, the woman can be seen to be a symbol of Europe colonialist Europe. However, her glorified purpose seems to be undermined by the fact that she is blindfolded, suggesting ~~that~~ that perhaps suggesting that she, and therefore colonialist Europe, ~~is~~ blind to the consequences of the supposed 'spreading of enlightenment'. Indeed, earlier on in the novel, Marlow describes colonisation as "aggravated murder on a grand scale, and men going at it blind," which reinforces this view. In addition, Marlow talks about this painting after describing the 'horre' 'genre of death', a 'hellish, fiery inferno' where "black shapes crouched... in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment and despair", the triplet showing how much the natives are suffering under the ~~gate~~ yoke of colonisation. This lends a sinister sense to the painting, and Marlow seems to recognise this; "the background & was sombre - almost black... and the effect of the torchlight on her face was sinister". As such, it could be argued ~~that~~ that the 'torchlight', which ostensibly can be seen to represent enlightenment and civilisation, is rather a symbol of the fiery and hellish nature of

colonialism. This interpretation is compounded by the truth that King Leopold II's reign in the Congo Free State was notably brutal, and hence, through the subtle symbol of a woman carrying a torch, Conrad is allowed to expose the reality of a colonialist empire that claimed to be spreading enlightenment. In comparison, Twain uses St. Petersburg (which is not a real place) as a symbol, to ~~represent~~ allowing it to represent any town in the deep South of America. Whilst an ostensibly moral and Christian place, St. Petersburg is revealed to be rife with hypocrisy, arguably a consequence of its colonial roots. For instance, the Widow Douglas appears to be a morally upstanding character; she is of Christian religion, shown by the fact that she is ~~an~~ eager to teach Huck about Moses and the 'Bible stories', 'Moses' being a key figure in the Old Testament. However, despite her ostensibly Christian outlook, she still exercised slaveholding, a clearly deeply corrupt ~~way~~ action. Indeed, Twain coined this age in society the 'gilded age', where a facade of morality hid the deeper corruption beneath. However, Huck, as a symbol of the modest ^{pro} ~~pro~~, (due to his lack of family, lower class status, and liminal position on the raft on the river) manages somewhat to escape the corruption of society, allowing him to point out the hypocrisy in figures like

the Widow Berger, (for example, how she couldn't let him smoke, but "she took snuff too; of course that was alright, because she done it herself"). This allows Twain to expose the corruption in the symbolic St. Petersburg. Twain also uses regionalism, a form of American realism, to further present a very 'real' American St. Petersburg, allowing it to become a symbol of any town in deep South America. Therefore, both Conrad and Twain uses symbols to expose the ideas around colonialism, in a way that is subtle, and partially removes them from views that would be ~~seen~~ as looked down upon in their ~~contemporary~~ contemporary societies.

In addition, it could be argued that Twain uses the Duke and Dauphin as symbolic of the ruling classes, and as a result can explore how they are arguably corrupt. The Duke and Dauphin are very morally dubious characters; the are two con artists who scam small towns, for example "selling an article to take the biter of the teeth - and it does take it off, too, and generally, generally the animal along with it". Their most morally reprehensible action is certainly selling Jim into slavery. Despite their evident corruption, Twain affords them the title of the Duke and Dauphin, causing Huck to say "most kings is mostly ~~republicans~~ scoundrels".



This essay begins with a detailed exploration of the symbolism of key settings in both novels, closely linking these to contexts.



When a question is focused around a specific technique, look for opportunities to explore contextual links.

Question 5

Question 5 asked candidates to consider the presentation of characters who are suspected of crimes. The best answers were able to differentiate between those who were rightly or wrongly suspected, considering the subtle methods used by the writers to direct (or misdirect) the suspicions of both investigating characters and readers. It was encouraging to read many responses on *The Cutting Season*, often in combination with *The Moonstone* or *Lady Audley's Secret*.

Some responses to this question lacked sufficient focus on the contextual factors influencing our readings, particularly for *The Cutting Season*. Candidates are reminded that while the conventions of the crime genre can be discussed as a legitimate and often useful context, we advise a broad understanding of other contextual factors, such as historical, social, cultural and political contexts to ensure that the text has been explored thoroughly.

A number of candidates appeared to have pre-learned particular scenes or quotations to analyse, which were not always appropriately shaped to the question. For example, in this question analysis of the colour symbolism of the red truck which follows Caren, which was often not directly linked to a 'character who was suspected of crimes' was largely irrelevant. More focused responses made the argument that the truck was used to cast misdirected suspicion upon Hunt Abrams, along with a number of other incidents and circumstances. Focusing primarily on the truck was rarely relevant to the question.

This essay on *The Moonstone* and *The Cutting Season* was placed in Level 4.

Text 1:

The Moonstone - Wilkie Collins

Text 2:

The Cutting Season - Attieha Locke

Both Attieha Locke and Wilkie Collins present characters who are suspected of crimes through the typical conventions of the crime genre. Suspicion is evoked through the portrayal of various characters, although sometimes in misleading, through the use of 'Red Herrings.' Attieha Locke evokes suspicion against a southern American backdrop which holds a guilty past, whilst Collins uses the past and reputations of characters to provoke suspicion.

Both authors deliberately mislead readers by portraying suspects in honourable light. Godfrey, who is ultimately suspected of the crime by Cuff, is ~~also~~ initially illustrated as a

philanthropic man who ^{outwardly} ~~substantially~~ represents moral righteousness. Clack refers to Godfrey as a "Christian hero," drawing divine connotations through her hyperbolic description. Godfrey is ultimately guilty of crime, and is conversely described by Clack as a "new character," emphasising his facade. Calves uses Godfrey to critique Victorian society's tendency to substitute claims of moral righteousness with actual positive social change. The reader is initially lured into trusting Godfrey, ~~the narrator's~~ ~~suspicion~~ ~~however~~ his claims of purity and evangelicism eventually fall through. Similarly, Attieha Locke lures the reader into trusting Bobby ^{Clare}, through welcoming description. Clare refers to Bobby as "Bobby, who always let her tag along places, who never made her feel differed for being born a girl... and Black." Clare assigns Bobby with empathetic qualities designed to ^{lure} ~~take~~ the reader into a false sense of trust. However, like Godfrey, this trust is eventually broken as we are made aware of his ~~crime~~ ~~over~~ ^{crime} Locke discusses Bobby's indifference to Clare's race and gender, however in doing so implies Clare has ^{prejudice} ~~prejudice~~ due to her skin colour. Locke discusses themes of racial prejudice throughout the novel, drawing unmissably similar parallels between the times of ^{slavery} ~~slavery~~ and ^{modern} ~~modern~~ America. Whilst visiting a ^{plantation} ~~plantation~~ for a ^{wedding} ~~wedding~~, Locke stated

she was ~~writing~~ ^{standing} ~~in some starting~~ on land that "represented so much racial violence and pain."

Atticus Locke and Willie Collins both present characters wrongly suspected of crime as a result of prejudicial assumptions. In The Collins Season, Donovan Isaacs immediately falls suspect to the crime, despite a lack of evidence. The procedure is described as "the cops slapdash investigation" drawing connotations of careless carelessness and injustice. Donovan is subject to racial prejudice as a result of police incompetence and racism. Atticus Locke frequently critiques the incompetence and racial discrimination faced by the judicial system. Donovan ~~the~~ quotes Cohen, stating "what choice I got?" implying that the strength of prejudice will ~~overwhelm~~ ^{inevitably outweigh} the truth. Locke ~~illustrates~~ ^{then illustrates} this to comment on the oppressive racial discrimination still present in 21st century America. Willie Collins similarly critiques Victorian society ~~and the~~ through the discrimination of Bama Specman. Rosanna becomes a suspect of the crime, due to her post as a "hief." Rosanna, like Donovan, is quick to be blamed due to her post, and her position in society. Rosanna is alienated by characters ^{like} ~~such~~ as Frankie who ^{refer} ~~refers~~ to her as "plain" and ~~oversees~~.

a "poor girl" who "can't help being ugly." Rosanna's physical demeanour and "deformed" "depressed shoulders" make her an easy suspect due to Victorian views on disabled women of a lower class. ~~BB~~ Collins sheds light on the harshness of Victorian hierarchy ~~by~~ through the eventual suicide of Rosanna. In contrast, Donovan is ultimately proven innocent and not convicted of crime. However, at one point Donovan is willing to take a "plea deal", ~~stating~~ illustrating how he, like Rosanna, feels the pressure of society and gives in to injustice.

~~Willie Collins perhaps Franklin as a man of intelligence, a "universal genius," as described by Bettendorfer, however~~

Willie Collins presents the power of love in protecting those ~~to~~ suspected of crimes. Rachel protects Franklin by not telling anyone that she saw him take the diamond, however confronts him, stating "You villain, I saw you take the diamond with my own eyes." Here, the reader is confronted to decipher and ~~just~~ choose between the judgement of Rachel's "own eyes" or the narrator. Whilst we eventually discover Franklin unwittingly stole the diamond, Collins illustrates



In this essay, the candidate uses the genre of crime fiction as a context which leads to an exploration of specific methods the authors use to misdirect and mystify the readers. The first two sections of the essay consider firstly characters who committed crimes and how they avoid suspicion initially, and then characters who are wrongly suspected of crimes. The result is a well structured essay which is grounded in context.



Remember that genre is often a useful context to explore, particularly when you can discuss how writers have used or subverted the typical features of a genre.

This response on *In Cold Blood* and *Lady Audley's Secret* was placed at the lower end of Level 5.

~~Both Braddon in Lady Audley's Secret~~

"It is a hard thing to be poor". Both Braddon in 'Lady Audley's Secret' (hereafter 'Secret') and Capote in 'In Cold Blood' craft the characterisation of those suspected of crimes in order to make us question, as readers, our own moral compass. By presenting both their horrific crimes and detailing their tragic childhood, both Braddon and Capote forces us to analyse the nature vs nurture debate by as we begin to understand the motivations to commit such heinous crimes. Whether poverty, inherited madness or simply ~~some~~ deep-rooted evil possessed these characters to commit such crimes, both Braddon's and Capote's delivery of their novels encourages us to reflect on the societal treatment of criminals - in line with the growing interest in psycho-analysis of both the ^{Victorian} 1850s and the facination of true crime in the 1950s America.

Both authors humanise their criminals, without glorifying their crimes. Characterised by periods of uncertainty, for Braddon the

perpetual fear of the ~~gr~~ rising working class infiltrating the upper classes of Victorian England, for Capote the debates around capital punishment, which in fact was outlawed following *Furman v Georgia* 1972, ~~the~~ ruling it 'unconstitutional', Braddon and Capote both wrote to appeal to their audiences. Lady Audley is a play on the traditional 'Angel of the House', embodying the feminine aesthetic, with her "golden locks" and "deep blue eyes", yet serving as a warning of the dangers of outward perception. Braddon highlights this duality in an attempt to force her ~~on~~ readers, most of whom would have been middle class, to question ~~where they~~ where their trust lies, and the absurdity of objectifying women - ignoring their nature below the surface. Her description of Lady Audley as an "amber-haired Siren", who "beckoned" Robert Audley, presents this mythical folkloric nature to her character, as these belied Sirens lured sailors to their death. Ultimately, we are continuously unsettled^②, yet, like those around

^② with her eyes embodying perfectly the foreboding pathetic fallacy of the Gothic opening of the novel, as the "heavy ominous sunset... and deathly silence filled the air" - something outwardly beautiful, yet deeply disturbing.

her in the novel, are fascinated by this duality, much like that of Perry in 'In Cold Blood'. However, while Braddon had to operate within the fixed realm of Sensationalist fiction, with red herrings, clues and cliffhangers necessary to keep readers returning to the serialised release in the Sixpenny Magazine, Capote had more freedom - in fact adopting his own style of the literary non-fiction in his ^{inaugural} ~~inaugural~~ work.

Like Lady Audley, the perpetrators in 'In Cold Blood' (Dick and Perry) are also characterised by a unmanaging sense of duality. Dick has a similar outward charm to which corrupts those around him, particularly Perry, "Perry, down to his last fifteen dollars, was ready to settle for root beer and a sandwich, but Dick said no, they needed a solid 'tuck in', and never mind the cost, the tab was his." This perfectly embodies the dynamic between Dick and Perry. Perry, who lacked the 'tough love' of a worthy father-figure, arguably saw Dick as his companion, or as far as Capote who perhaps wanted us to empathise with Perry due to his supposed 'homosexual feelings'.

towards Perry, wanted us to believe. However, it is arguably this charm which creates our frustration and resentment towards Dick and allows us to sympathise with Perry as, like Lady Audley's corruption of those with her superficial beauty, Dick corrupts Perry into doing the most awful crime of murder - highlighting the power of charm, which forces us as readers to resent the corruption of the 'innocent' while questioning our own ability to be corrupted.



This essay thoughtfully considers how the authors use those suspected of crimes to examine societal issues and 'make us question our own moral compass'. The AO1 arguments are conceptual and evaluative.

Question 6

Question 6 asked how writers created suspense. Some candidates struggled to pin down exactly what was meant by suspense and gave examples of e.g. dramatic moments in the text without focusing on how the writer built up to these to create anticipation, or a sense of mystery. Better responses focused more directly on aspects of the writers' craft, considering how writers used conventions of the crime genre such as red herrings, false leads and misdirection to create suspense, for example in the build up to revealing the identity of the criminals, or other key moments in the texts. Weaker responses tended towards a listing approach, giving examples of tense moments in the novels but not considering how the writers had created these. A closer focus on AO2 tended to lead to a more well developed and discriminating response.

As in Question 5, a significant minority of candidates did not discuss the contextual influences on the texts and authors in detail, thereby limiting the marks they could be rewarded in AO3.

This answer on *The Moonstone* and *The Cutting Season* gained a mark in Level 4.

Both novels ^{imminently} ~~immediately~~ partly create suspense through death and a sense of field of death and enigma, however both with ~~completely~~ alien motives. In 'The Moonstone' Collins initially presents suspense through the stark death

of the Indians highlighting the sensual info as Hecate "held a torch in one hand and a dagger dripping with blood", reinforcing the merciless, brutal nature of the British Empire. The alliteration of 'dagger dripping' creates an atmosphere of shock, the noun "dagger" connecting violence and death underlining the cruel nature of Hecate. The verb "dripping" is ~~so~~ sensual as if the audience themselves can hear the dripping of blood, Collins engaging the audience in the novel in a bloody suspense. The "torch" is symbolic of the destructive nature of the British empire as Collins reflects upon the greed and death the British ruling brought upon the innocent as he notes Hecate a symbol of the aggression and greed. Collins ~~engages~~ purposely creates suspense in this manner to critique the poisonous nature of Victorian England and make the audience less aware of the brutal nature of the ruling, with Collins raising anxieties about a society driven by power and greed. Modern audiences would react to this in shock and horror due to the lack of proper and morally right then occurs, though this Collins creates suspense in 'The Cuthberts' similarly in 'The Cuthberts' Locke was a semantic field of death to create both enigma and suspense as Chen says "She was covered in mud up to her knees, her spine in a cruel pain", the gruesome imagery evoking feelings of fear and anger. The phrase "covered in mud" suggests longevity behind the attack as if this had been swept away. The phrase "cruel spine" ~~is~~ expresses chilling imagery as if this attack was more than just murder, creating feelings of suspense. Locke highlights the injustices toward migrant workers, ~~as~~ the book was written after the election of Barack Obama which led to minor improvements with racism, however this also led to an increase in mistreatment of immigrants and labor laws. Locke criticizes a society where those who are seen as low in society as well as a threat. The reader would react to this mirrored due to the gruesome imagery and lack of ~~clarity~~ clarity over the attack. Both novels initially present

Suspense through death.

In both novels suspense is portrayed through differing views, while Collins uses love as a form of protection ~~rather~~ to create suspense, Lock on the other hand uses character bias as a method of deception. In 'The Century Woman' Lock presents Cora as the main detective who has faced many racial adversities creating a sense of pathos, however Cora says Bobby is a good person, exclaiming "new made 'let me tag along place, new made me feel discomf for being born a girl and black", reinforcing their racial stereotypes. This creates a shield around Bobby which only comes to the fore when he is tied to the death of Irene Alice. The phrase "tag along" connotes isolation highlighting the struggles Cora must though as a young girl. The parallel of "girls" and "black" in the same sentence underlines the inequities in modern America, as Cora risks two inner voices for her freedom, however portrays Bobby in a positive light and story biases as the main character. Lock purposely presents Bobby in this way to create sympathy and a false sense of security, although he is the perpetrator. Lock also uses him as a crime to depict a unjust modern day. Like racism and greed involves racial lines, Lock criticises this through his personal career as an author writing many books that highlight legal injustice and racism. In contrast, Collins uses Rachel as a key character that creates tension and suspense through her constantly changing about the truth yet never revealing it until the end, "you villain I see you for the devil" out of anger and frustration. Collins presents Rachel's protest as a form of love, ~~thence~~ the non "villain" connotes evil and injury which Rachel associates with Fenton as she is control as to why he hasn't come up but more importantly to her, the loss of father and affection he has shown to her. The phrase "I see" encapsulates Rachel's love as a force that creates suspense, as she never gives up about it and didn't confess him anything just sat

loyalty. This letter portrayed Victor in Victorian England as when he is supposed to be
survivor to her, especially their husband's house for Rachel this is because due
to her class and not being married, highlights her love for Freddy. Frankenstein Collins
critiques a society where you don't speak up and you get away with murder.
Lock creates suspense through systematic bias. While Collins was the first
not to create suspense.

In both novels the writers present suspense through contrasting methods. While Collins
opens each story, Lock uses the theme of injustice as the main force behind suspense.
While whereas Collins uses justice and the supernatural to build suspense. In 'The
Moonstone' Collins creates suspense through trauma and the supernatural as the Brothers
say, "The Moonstone will have its vengeance on you", creating mystery and threat
which is yet to be fulfilled. The novel uses "vengeance" connotes revenge and justice.
Reinforcing British imperialism could not have been critiqued by Collins through just say
sent. This silence evokes suspense due to the haunting nature and constant
connotation of witchcraft and ^{supernatural} wizardry associated with the Indians in Victorian
England. Suggesting the fear contemporary audience ^{were} ~~may~~ ^{have} been exposed to by the fact
new San Francisco took refers to it as the "devil diamond"; connotes evil
and injury suggesting the diamond has a life of its own and a few will be
big diamonds, further creating suspense. This suspense is finally cut short when
they return the diamond and kill Godwin, "he was strangled", the word "strangled"
connotes death and guilting in the death. Collins was criticized for opposing
the method of the British Empire by other literary authors such as Charles
Dickens. In contrast, suspense is created by Lock through the constant
suspension yet looks at justice over Raymond Clary as he says, "I wish
so bad not to look like the villain in this" highlighting his intelligent and

evildoer rather than a choice such as death. The phrase "I had so bad" indicates Cora is surprised at him and his act is easily forgiven yet he gets away with it anyway. This is further reinforced as Betty says, "I don't want a goddam thing to do with me unless it's damn dirty" further reinforcing that he gets away with evil and obviously further reassures in the reader. This indicates Raymond has been the rational thought yet Lock highlights his ~~retardation~~ meticulous nature that it can do evil. Lock finally gives further suspense through Raymond as he says "The change has looked after you long in more ways than one", building suspense through the lack of clarity and context about his actions, relating relating to the death of John. This reflects the Homestead Act of 1862. Like after the Civil War ~~the~~ people were given land yet black people were denied fair access due to legal loopholes. Lock refers to this ~~the~~ when Clay says "more ways than one", suggesting both death and greed, as they killed John and took his land, the twist surprise as the reader is expecting for a happy ending, yet Lock portrays the ending as unjust to restore Society. The ending scene points suspense through a lack of justice while 'The Merchant' presents suspense that is twisted through justice.

Ultimately both novels explore suspense through a multitracked ~~more~~ means, while Lock presents suspense through historical drama and the deep evil. Both are intended to highlight past injustices, death and ~~and~~ cruelty. When Collins portrays suspense through the already explicitly known and pervasive nature of Colonialism through the British Empire that King and judges indicated who was innocent or not concerning being killed. Both novels serve as cautionary tales that highlight the days of slavery era and society yet still lead to the era of evil and that, indicating how suspense is built through each novel.



This essay integrates a range of contextual factors into the answer, considering genre, politics, race, migrant workers, the British Empire, the roles of women in Victorian England and more! Each contextual point is used to explore the meanings of the text, and is linked to the question of how suspense is created.



When writing about contexts, try to show the breadth of your knowledge by including a range of different influences

This response on *The Cutting Season* and *Lady Audley's Secret* was placed in Level 5.

P3: Symbolism - Pre-Raphaelite

P3: Symbolism / red herring

'red pickup truck' 'earring' - in Abram's
trailer

'Lady Audley's Secret', a sensation novel written by Braddon,

In the sensation novel 'Lady Audley's Secret', Braddon presents the theme of suspense through the setting, sensation fiction techniques and symbolism. Braddon explores the hypocrisy of the aristocracy and the duality of society while building suspense. Similarly, Locke explores the theme of suspense in 'The Cutting Season' through setting, detective tropes and also symbolism. However, Locke focuses more on the injustice surrounding race, slavery and migration to create suspense. ~~Both authors explore~~
~~criticise their society through~~

In 'Lady Audley's Secret', Braddon creates suspense through the setting, where Audley Court is first introduced. Despite the perfect image of the 'rhododendrons which grew in more perfection here than anywhere else in the county', it insinuates that it is too

good to be true. The fact it grew in 'more perfection' ~~here~~ in the high status Audley Court hints at the high standards of reputation that the aristocracy had to uphold. In contrast to the perfect image of perfection, the lime-walk reveals a darker side to the upper class as it was 'so shaded from the sun and sky' and 'so screened from observation', implying there is something not to be trusted. The ~~six~~ repetition of 'so' emphasises how 'shaded' and 'screened' from observation the lime-walk is, and the alliterative 's' sounds and use of sibilance could reflect the idea of suspicion and evil as it imitates the sound of a snake. This creates tension as it presents the duality of the upper class, and the fact that the lime-walk seemed a place for 'secret meetings and stolen interviews' reinforces this. This also could foreshadow the confrontation that Robert and Lady Audley face in the lime walk, where the suspense is arguably at its greatest point. A reader from Victorian society may be pleased at the perfect presentation of the upper class mansion, however, the flaws which are evident could be Braddon's way of exposing terrible truths in Victorian society.

In a similar way, ~~Leche~~ in 'The Cutting Season', Leche presents the Belle Reve plantation ~~to be~~ as a place not to be trusted, despite its beautiful appearance. The fact that 'its beauty was not to be trusted' hints to the reader that there could be dark underlying history surrounding the plantation, ~~ex~~ especially because of the fact that slaves were exploited here before the emancipation.

proclamation, where Belle Vue is described to have a 'loamy topsoil' and 'manicured grounds' which initially paint the setting to be a place of perfection, similarly to Audley Court is initially presented. However, it is then stated that beneath this, 'lay a land both black and bitter (...) pressing in its power'. The plosive 'b' sounds could reflect Locke's ~~own~~ personal views of using a plantation as a place to attract tourists and host weddings, ~~as when she visited the Oak Alley plantation~~ ^{as} Belle Vue is based off the Oak Alley plantation ^{which Locke herself visited}. ~~The conflicting presentation in of Belle Vue~~ The frequent use of alliteration in 'lay a land', 'black and bitter' and 'pressing in its power' helps the line stand out from the other lines. ~~This~~ ~~says~~ 'black and bitter' creates suspense as it suggests a darker side to the plantation. Similarly to Audley Court, the Belle Vue plantation presents the duality of humanity and the upper class, and both authors expose truths about the past through this setting.

~~At~~ Another way in which Braddon creates suspense is through the use of sensation fiction tropes. After being presented with the Lucy, who openly agrees to marry Sir Michael for the 'advantages of such an alliance', suspense is created in the moments where Lucy is left alone. ~~They~~ The ^{'ring} ~~item~~ wrapped in an oblong piece of paper (...) crumpled with much folding' hints at the serious crime of bigamy, and the fact it is 'crumpled with much folding' demonstrates Lucy's ability to keep this a secret. The fact that the paper is 'partly written, partly printed, yellow with age'

makes the reader question how long she has been married for, and how long she has kept this a secret. The repetition of 'partly' creates confusion for the reader, and the plosive 'p' sounds could emphasise the seriousness of her crimes. In Victorian society, to marry someone for any reason other than love was considered unacceptable, and the fact that there is the exposure of her bigamy immediately presents ~~that~~ Lucy's character to be untrustworthy. ~~and The Braddon creates suspense by exposing evidence of crimes and wrongdoing.~~ Furthermore, the chapter ending on this event is due to the book being released in ~~similarity, in 'The Cutting Season', Locke present & creates suspense through the use~~ serial form. ~~Cliffhangers~~ The Braddon's use of cliffhangers were a technique to draw readers in, ~~and many of her readers were working or middle class women~~

~~Similarly,~~ Locke creates suspense ~~thru~~ in a similar way, but through the use of detective tropes. The character of Morgan allows for the use of narrative gaps to be created, as when Karen sees the stain on Morgan's shirt which looked 'frighteningly like blood', Morgan withholds information and says 'I don't know what that is'. ~~The reader is forced to~~ The presentation of Morgan as a typical child hiding information to not get in trouble intensifies the suspense as she ^{appears} ~~seems to~~ have some involvement in the murder of Mrs. Morgan's ^{utilises} ~~Locke uses~~ Morgan's character to create these narrative gaps so the reader is left guessing her ~~not~~ involvement of the

Crime, drawing readers' ^{attention} in a similar way to Braddon's technique

Braddon also creates suspense through the use of symbolism. Not only do the names of the chapters create suspense, they also reflect the events in the novel. 'Before the storm' could be said to be before chaos begins, and 'After the storm' implies the destruction which could have occurred during the storm. The 'storm' could be a symbol for George Talboys discovering that Helen Talboys actually being Lady Audley, and ~~his reaction~~ ^{confuses} moreover, in the chapter 'Before the storm', the Pre-Raphaelite painting of Lady Audley exposes the truth about her character. The ~~implications~~ ^{implications} of 'glimmer of gold' and 'delicate face' suggests a heavenly and beautiful woman, emphasised with the alliterative 'g' sounds as if she were glowing. However, the clear exposure of her evil intentions are presented through the 'strange, sinister light' which was given to the 'deep blue eyes'. The sibilance of 'strange' and 'sinister' ~~can~~ could reflect the tone of suspicion, and also could create a ~~new~~ haunting image of Lady Audley which contrasts the beautiful image created prior to this. Furthermore, the fact that 'no-one but a Pre-Raphaelite' could create the 'almost wicked look' in the portrait suggests the painter could see through Lady Audley's facade of being the Angel of the House and an ideal Victorian woman. Pre-Raphaelite painters were known for their deep attention to detail, ~~which~~ ^{which} which could be why the 'wicked look' of the portrait was visible here. Braddon creates suspense through the symbolism

of the pre-Raphaelite painting, which exposes Lady Audley's wickedness.

In contrast, although Locke utilises symbolism, the use of red hennings are more visible. Their ^{mysterious} 'red pickup truck' which seems to follow Caren could be seen as a symbol of danger and suspense. ~~The colour 'red' implies~~ The red herring of Owens appearing at the place where ~~her~~ she looks for her phone implies that he could be involved in the crime and is not to be trusted. However, we later discover that the red pickup truck belongs to Bobby Clancy.



This essay is successfully structured in order to closely compare the ways suspense is created in the two texts. It starts with a comparison of the use of settings, then explores tropes of the specific genres to which the novels belong, and finally connects the texts through the writers' use of symbolism.



Carefully planning your essay will help you clearly structure your ideas make your arguments clear and controlled.

Question 7

Question 7 asked about the presentation of victims.

This question was in general very well answered, with much nuanced discussion of victimhood, its causes and the contextual factors influencing authors' exploration of the theme. Discussions of the role of society in creating victims, and nuanced analysis of the victimisation of marginalised groups such as women, or those considered as 'other' was frequently seen. Candidates discussed the moral and ethical implications of this, engaging thoughtfully with ideas around surveillance, human rights, autonomy and dehumanisation.

Some candidates took a more character focused approach, with frequent discussion of the ways in which Offred and Frankenstein's creature can be considered as victims. While often sensible, these responses were sometimes limited in scope and remained focused on plot points rather than considering the ways the writers had constructed victimhood, and the wider themes and ideas being interrogated. There was some interesting discussion of the blurred lines between victim and perpetrators, often centring on antagonistic characters who could be considered victims, or who position themselves as victims, for example comparisons of Serena Joy and the Commander, and Victor Frankenstein. Others explored the extent to which characters were victims of their own actions, for example the clones' passivity contributing to their victimisation in *Never Let Me Go*, or human complacency and feelings of superiority leaving them unprepared for the Martian attack in *The War of the Worlds*.

Some discussion of contextual influences was not fully explained, for example references to the Enlightenment as an influence on Shelley without demonstrating a clear understanding of how the author had been influenced by this, or indeed precisely what it was. Better responses were able to articulate how texts had been shaped by contexts,

Some candidates displayed a tendency to write a rather generic introduction, citing the dates of publication or genre of the texts, along with a broad comment on the narrative voice of the novel. While these details can be relevant to the text and question, better responses tended to make a clear opening argument which focused on the terms of the question, or select contextual factors which had specifically influenced the presentation of victimhood.

This essay on *Frankenstein* and *The Handmaid's Tale* was placed in mid-Level 3.

In the novels 'Frankenstein' by Mary Shelley and 'A Handmaid's Tale' by Margaret Atwood, we see ~~the~~ the construction of ~~the~~ victims in a number of ways. ~~first~~ In 'Frankenstein', Shelley presents her victims in two ways: either as passive characters of innocence and purity who are betrayed

by those less pure than them, or as villains who fall victim to themselves. Shelley's victims fit to serve the purpose of demonstrating the destruction caused when one lacks control.

~~Abused victims~~ In 'A Handmaid's Tale', Atwood similarly constructs her victims as victims of others, power and their own lack of control.

Both authors encourage empathy through the use of their victims, demonstrating the cycle of victimhood and the suffering that every character endures in different ways, thus implying common ground even where most unlikely.

The novels share their consideration of society as the greatest nuisance, ~~disturbing a great and~~ defying nature and alienating ~~its~~ humanity.

In 'Frankenstein', all of Shelley's characters can be considered victims of society. Firstly, we see Victor's early alienation from society, criticised by his father for his interests in particular science and scientists that he looked up to, deeming them "sad trash".

Victor struggles in relationships, his relationship with Elizabeth seemingly obscure. Upon his creation, Victor tells no one of his plans. He speaks very little of friendships or relations during his time in university and leading up to his creation, besides Clerval. Being

a somewhat abnormal personality, Victor may have been subjected to prejudice and social rejection.

In this way, Victor is a victim to his society, which is unaccepting of him, like his father. Victor's downfall at the hands of his creation can also be blamed on his education. Victor is a victim of society in the way that his scientific ambition lead him to defy natural laws. Shelley may be criticising scientific teachings of the time, the progression and particularly Galvanism, as destructive and misleading to the public that the natural world can be disobeyed. Victor falls victim to these teachings.

Other victims of society in 'Frankenstein' include the women, all with passive roles in the novel which may be Shelley's emphasis on the overlooking of women in society. Not only is their society prejudiced and unequal, but persons such as Victor are rejecting ~~their natural purpose as birthingers~~ their ancient natural purpose as birthingers. Elizabeth is murdered at the end of the novel by the creature, thus by Victor's indirect hand. He perceives the creature to be a threat to himself and does not consider the danger to Elizabeth, showing her as a victim to society's overlooking of her and of Victor's disregard. Justine falls victim to society too, particularly it's

dysfunctional justice system, mirrored in her name. She vows "God knows how entirely I am innocent", calling upon God to defend her and grant her justice, but ~~her~~ her prayers are ~~un~~ unanswered and she is executed for the murder of William that she did not commit. Her innocence and purity is destroyed by a society which undervalues her and punishes her for the mistakes of her male superiors, her fate ending very similarly to Elizabeth's.

~~an~~
In 'A Handmaid's Tale', Atwood also criticises the ~~degradation of~~ ~~villainy of~~ society, particularly against its women. Handmaids, Wives, Aunts, Marthas are all roles allocated to women in Gilead, each one serving traditional misogynistic roles, such as Marthas who typically do the cooking and the cleaning. On a more extreme level, Handmaids are given the birthing role, reduced ~~to~~ to their reproductive abilities. Their red gowns are symbols of their fertility, the colour of menstruation and mothering. Offred tells us that everything 'besides the white wings is red; the colour of blood, which defines us.' Offred demonstrates here the lack of individuality that their uniforms allow, the colour being the only thing that gives them identity. The "wings" around the Handmaids' heads are



The introduction of this essay puts forward a clear argument about the types of victims presented in the texts. There are some thoughtful ideas and the candidate shows good knowledge of the texts, but does not always include very much textual detail or comment upon the examples chosen, meaning there is a lack of detail in the AO2 analysis preventing a higher mark.



Focusing on how the writer presents a character, rather than what a character is like can help you to zoom in on AO2 more closely.

This essay on *The War of the Worlds* and *Never Let Me Go* was placed at the top of Level 5.

the universal experience of this in both texts.
Both Wells and Ishiguro powerfully portray characters who could be considered victims through their first explore personal emotions such as fear
person narrators who ~~are~~ ^{as victims} oppressed
the threats of
by social confines and science alike. Wells portrays the narrator as a victim of the Martian invasion through the first sighting of the Martians, in which the

reader is told "I stood petrified and staring" and
 "paralysed", conveying the extreme fear that the
 Martians conjure. ^{Wells'} The use of the short phrase and
~~monosyllabic~~ polysyndetic syntax powerfully conveys
 to the reader the ~~concept that the~~ heightened fear of
 the narrator at the point of invasion. The concept
 of fear to portray the narrators as victims is
 similarly utilised by Ishiguro in the exposition.
 Unlike ^{Wells'} the narrator's ~~reportage~~ ^{portrayal} style ~~conveyance~~
 of his emotions, "Kathy H" (the narrator) is given
 a colloquial and euphemistic tone. The power
 of fear in the exposition is portrayed through the
 subtle references which the reader have yet to fully
~~comprehend~~ comprehend of "finishing", being a
 "carer" and likewise a "donor". This perhaps
 portrays an underlying fear of fully accepting
 Kathy's fate as a clone. ~~Wells utilises the invasion of the Martians to~~
^{Ishiguro} ~~portray~~ echoes the fear in 1997 following
 Wilmut and Campbell's groundbreaking creation
 of milk to cure hemophilia utilising cloning
 as ^{he} creates an unsaid threat which the victim
 - Kathy - seems unable to process considering
~~her~~ her need to do "my work well". Much
 like Wells utilises the invasion of the Martians
 to portray how it changes the moral values of

his narrator, portrayed in the note "I had a momentary impulse to go back and help him that my fears overruled", Ishiguro similarly conjures the moral implications of threat (and as such, being a victim) through ^{Kathy's} poignant note ~~the~~ of the "Cold moment" of realisation that "there are people ... who nevertheless shudder at the very thought of you". Both authors as such present their narrators as victims who are changed by their dire situations - conveyed through ~~the~~ ~~a~~ Wells' portrayal of "impulse" being overruled and Ishiguro's use of direct address to the reader in which he utilises the poignant simile of "mirrors" to portray Kathy's epiphany that Madame "is scared of us" - despite the reader having a very different opinion of the clones. Wells' portrayal of the Martian invasion's brutal impact on the reader perhaps echoes the 1834 Poor Law in which Victorian society stressed self-help and workhouses as a way to combat the extreme poverty of society - an instinct of survival much like his unnamed (~~an~~ ultimately symbolic) narrator. Therefore, both authors ~~portray~~ powerfully portray victims through their narrators' ^{retrospective reflections on their} first understandings of the extent of threat they face. ⚡

Wells and Ishiguro extend their exploration of the ~~roots~~ victims within scientific development through the

poignant portrayal of collective victims. The ~~emotional~~ ^{striking} concept of an "exodus" of a whole population compared to Ishiguro's portrayal of the clones' collective ~~a~~ response to being victims of an extractive society ~~power~~ is utilised by both authors to convey to the reader ~~the~~ the impact that a lack of power has. This is conveyed in Wells' amplification of those considered weak in Victorian society being at risk, such as "two women and a little boy were crushed and trampled there, and left to die", creating a striking image of the Darwinian impact need to survive (society harms each other). This can be seen through the monosyllabic harsh tone of 'left to die' which aptly reflects ideas within Darwin's 1859 'Origin of the Species', that victims at risk of death will have no qualms ~~and~~ ^{or} "no time for pugilistic chivalry" - reflecting the threat of scientific development on moral structures. Ishiguro similarly explores the concept of victims as the weakest in society through the ~~the~~ lack of rebellion incited by the clones' fate. This can be seen in Miss Lucy's comment that "you've got to know" ~~properly~~ what "each of you was created to do", then revealing to the ~~recipients~~ 16 year old clones that their "purpose" is to "donate your vital organs", which due to the consistent use of

analepsis is a revelation to the reader. ~~This is~~ Ishiguro creates an even more poignant portrayal of victims through the clones' ~~see~~ rhetorical questions "Well so what?" - a sense of submission unlike Wells' portrayal that "humanity gathered for the battle". As such, Ishiguro utilizes the collective voice of the clones to reflect their lack of power which results in a sense of lethargic ignorance - yet through Ruth's later speech that they must be "modelled from trash". This perhaps reflects the ~~risk~~ ^{fears} of genetic engineering (beginning in 1902) and the concept of eugenics being utilised to create 'designer babies' - Ishiguro utilises a haunting litany of "junkies, prostitutes, winos, tramps" to convey the social divides following Thatcherism (in which there was a 5% increase in poverty in England) and the ~~era~~ ^{fears} of the scientific technological revolution of the late 20th century that science may be a risk to human flaws - paralleled by the clones' emotional state. Much like ~~the~~ ^{Wells'} narrator attempts to address the state of mass weakness of society at the hands of the Martians through the conceit of "eatable ants", Ishiguro utilises a similar symbolic portrayal of human weakness through the conceit of a "river" in which ^{two people' symbolic of} Kathy and Tommy, ^{are} "trying to hold onto each other" but "The current's too strong". Both authors utilise powerful natural symbolism

to convey ~~as such~~ the lack of power ~~collective~~ universal victims have in the face of oppression (whether from external threats or society itself).



This exceptional essay is particularly good at combining nuanced close textual analysis with conceptual ideas. The argument develops from a comparison of the narrators as victims to a discussion of the collective victimhood of large groups of characters. A wide range of contextual influences are incorporated into the response, and examples are drawn from throughout both texts, showing real mastery of the material.

This response on *The War of the Worlds* and *The Handmaid's Tale* was placed at the bottom of Level 5.

Both Atwood and Wells construct their narrators as victims as they both have their identities deconstructed and erased by the ^{societal} frameworks that surround them. Whereas Offred's identity crisis stems from systemic control and engineered dehumanisation, Wells' narrator's emerges from the ^{systemic} destruction, ~~of~~ ^{indeed} revealing his criticisms of the fragility of such confined narratives in contrast to Atwood's critique of the patriarchy. Indeed, as in 'Handmaids', Offred poignantly admits how she 'used to think' ^{of} her 'body as an instrument' but now 'the flesh arranges itself differently'. Here, the ^{stark} juxtaposition between the ^{functional} of 'instrument' and the visceral imagery of 'flesh' emanates a tone of detachment and disgust, revealing how under the regime's gendered subjugation, she feels dislocated ~~and~~ from her physical vessel, viewing it as something 'other'. Despite her attempts to reclaim her identity through her epistolary narrative, ~~despite~~ ^{inverting} Descartes' ~~the~~ proverb, 'I tell therefore you exist', she remains a victim to the erasure of her identity ^{and memories} as while she has control over her mind, her body remains commodified and controlled ^{by Gilead}. This ^{fragmented} dissonance evokes the idea of the Cartesian split, wherein her existential crisis and victimhood to erasure is perpetuated further by her inability to bridge her mind and body together ^{into one complete entity}. Through this,

Atwood perhaps voices her criticisms of ~~the~~ how patriarchal regimes victimise women through severing their connection to the body and sense of self as a means of consolidating hegemonic control. Indeed, as this is echoed further in Offred's description of the 'red' 'tulips shedding their petals ... like teeth', with this visceral and anatomical simile ^{and yonic} ~~image~~, serving as an allusion to the ~~free~~ Freudian myth 'Vagina Dentata' ~~in literature~~ - the male phobia of castration. Here, this allusion becomes a feminist commentary on how the women in Gilead, such as Offred, become victims of ~~the~~ society, as the patriarchy frames their femininity as subversive and dangerous, ~~thus~~ with this fragmentation of identity serving as a justification for male hegemonic control. Contextually, this subversion of the female identity may allude to the evangelical movement of the 'moral majority' under Reagan, and how they similarly subverted feminism and sexual liberty as dangerous and responsible for the moral decline of society, again reiterating Atwood's criticism of such control. Within 'War', Wells' narrator ^{similarly} ~~also~~ becomes a victim of identity erasure, albeit through ^{the} systemic breakdowns of anthropocentric and hubristic frameworks, ^{as opposed to systemic control}, thus becoming a polemic on the fragility of such social hierarchies. Indeed, as the narrator admits how he feels

a 'sense of dethronement' and is 'no longer a master' but an 'animal amongst animals under the marmian heel.' Here, the ^{metaphor} idea of 'dethronement' in conjunction with the preposition of 'under' is particularly significant as it reveals how the marmian invasion has shattered man's hubristic and anthropocentric narrative of self superiority, with the ^{herald} animalistic and dehumanising lexis of 'animals' echoing this and revealing how the man has essentially become prey and a victim of the marmian's dehumanisation. Through this ~~this~~ inversion of Social Darwinism, Wells explores how the narrator becomes a victim as he ultimately experiences an evolutionary 'fall from grace' wherein his previous Imperialist worldview is witheringly shattered, thus igniting an existential crisis. Indeed, this is furthered through his admission that the 'fear' he felt was 'no rational fear', ^{with his frantic repetition} highlighting how due to the ^{systemic} breakdown of ~~secret~~ hubristic societal narrative, he is plunged into an overwhelming existential crisis and ^{inevitable} victimhood as he can no longer reconcile his new diminished identity with the social narrative he previously depended on. Through this, Wells perhaps criticises the fragility and instability of such contrived narratives, such as Social Darwinism, inviting the reader to question whether

we should construct ^{our} societies on such fictitious narratives,
as individuals ultimately fall victim to it.

Overall, both Atwood and Wells construct their
characters as victims to identity crisis. However,
while Atwood frames hers through systemic
control to criticise patriarchal hegemony and
misogynistic narrative, Wells ~~frames~~ ^{renders} his through
systemic breakdown to reveal the danger inherent
in continued social hierarchies.



In this section of the essay the candidate closely compares the ways that the narrators are presented as victims, finding insightful connections between characters who may initially seem very different. They are also linked through their very different social contexts, which are seen as causing crises in identity.

Question 8

Question 8 required candidates to explore the presentation of friendships.

Many answers focused on specific pairs of characters when analysing friendship, for example Tommy and Kathy, Frankenstein and Clerval or Walton, or Moira and Offred. There were thoughtful discussions of the importance of friendship to the human condition and the devastating consequences of the absence or loss of friendship, for example the narrator's madness in *The War of the Worlds*, the clones' alienation in *Never Let Me Go*, and the creature's anguish in *Frankenstein*. One candidate made an interesting argument about the use of friendship as a weapon in *The Handmaid's Tale*, with false camaraderie used as part of the surveillance and subjugation of the women, such as when it is used to encourage them to comply with the 'participation'. Another considered how the breakdown of the friendship between the narrator and the curate in *The War of the Worlds* suggested that science and religion could not coexist.

Descriptive approaches were generally less successful than those which were able to consider ideas about the necessity of friendship to the human condition, or a nuanced discussion of how writers conveyed the scope and significance of these friendships. AO2 analysis was sometimes thin, although candidates successfully discussed the symbolism, imagery and descriptions surrounding friendships, as well as the ways in which these end.

Contextual comments around the philosophical concepts surrounding friendship were often very well developed. One candidate made very strong arguments about the value of friendship in relation to Romanticism, linking Wordsworth and Coleridge to Shelley's characters and closely connecting this to the creature's isolation and the thematic function of Clerval in *Frankenstein*.

Many candidates writing about *Never Let Me Go* were able to insightfully explore the relationships between the clones, reflecting on the levels of trust and dependence inherent to these friendships, and Ishiguro's use of friendship, and its mundane ups and downs to evidence their humanity.

This response on *Frankenstein* and *Never Let Me Go* received a mark in mid-Level 5.

Text 1:

Frankenstein

Text 2:

Never let me go

In both "Frankenstein" and "Never let me go", Mary Shelley and Kazuo Ishiguro present friendship as a light that pervades the text, often emphatically depicted as a core to human fulfillment, and exonerator of humanity, but also as a fickle and ultimately futile endeavor that conjures pain and suffering. Simultaneously, a complex concept as, with its negligence, comes catastrophe. The visceral way in which friendship is discussed could perhaps be an emblem of the otherness intrinsic to both authors.

In both texts, friendship is presented as both a virtue of humanity, while diverging from typical norms through both a gothic and dystopian framework. In "Frankenstein," the creature becomes a symbol of longing for friendship and relationship as he cries, "I ought to be thy Adam!" the exclamation a sheer expression of emotion that

fuels a craving for friendship. In this way, friendship is almost a culmination of the core of humanity, a desperate endeavor through which the monster so ardently desires, the biblical allusion of "Adam" epistemologically tying the creature to Victor's paternal responsibility toward him. The modal verb "ought" creates a sense of utter desperation for friendship, something the creature seems to believe would fulfill and prove his soul's worth, therefore almost giving an entity to the concept, and holding it reverently as a core of humanity and expression. Similarly, Victor's prioritization of scientific discovery and the primary goal of fostering his hubris paints the concept of friendship and connection as a meaningless thing, his "solitary apartment" imbued with negligence of the human soul, the adjective solitary denoting his living quarters as devoid of friendship or tenderness, a perception that Mary Shelley challenges as fruitless and depraved. Victor becoming an emblem of the Enlightenment - a cautionary tale of scientific progression at the expense of nurturing human friendships. ~~Similarly~~ While the clones in "never let me go" embody a juxtaposing sense of community, it is less and flawed, further depicting the dangers of a society connected by sterile friendships. To the clones in part one, the Pavilion is a place wherein the clones could discuss things that "worried us," or "we might end up screaming with laughter," or on a "furious row." The juxtaposing senses of emotions displayed

through the visceral ^{adjectives} ~~words~~ of "worry", "laughter" and "fury" imbue their friendships with a noticeably complex expression, yet they all remain interlinked through the pronouns of "we" or "us". This almost collective humankind in spite of the conjured emotions immediately creates a disparity of complexity and understanding of friendship between the clones and the creature or Victor, with friendship acting as almost a second thought in "Frankenstein". However, friendships, whose core is the expression of humanity, in both "Never Let Me Go" and "Frankenstein" remain dysfunctional and deeply flawed, neglecting the true fruitfulness of connection. Perhaps this could be embodied in the dystopian trope and sense of society that Ishiguro creates, wherein emotions are compartmentalised and stunted. An almost dissociative function to divert from the grim fate of the clones.



This response explores not only specific examples of friendships but what they mean within the texts, starting with a discussion of friendship as a human virtue, and linking this to genre conventions. There is a close focus on the specific methods used by the writers to convey the importance of these friendships.

This essay on *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Frankenstein* was given a mark towards the top of Level 4.

Throughout both Atwood's 1985 ~~novel~~ dystopian fiction 'The Handmaid's Tale' and Shelley's early 19th century Gothic fiction 'Frankenstein', both writers explore the necessity of friendship with society, particularly when under ~~extremity~~ extreme hardship. Whilst Atwood's portrayal of friendship is arguably under considerably more restraint ~~than~~ ~~Shelley~~ due to totalitarian forces that condemn the formation of "friendships," "loyalties" and "alliances", Shelley's ~~presents friendship is her novel as~~ novel lacks this politicised and social condemnation of friendship, instead ~~demon~~ exploring ~~its~~ the testing of friendship under ~~more socially transgressive~~ through the consequences of scientific transgression. Nevertheless, both Shelley and Atwood presents ~~from~~ friendship as crucial in the functioning ~~and~~ of humanity.

Throughout both novels, the writers ~~press~~ present friendship as restorative and the provider of consolation amidst hardship. Atwood's ~~para~~ portrayal of the friendship of ~~Alia~~ between Moira and Offred ~~highlight as transcendent~~ with a sense of continuity from "the time before" into "the awfulness

and brutality of the [Gilead] Regime" in the Red Centre demonstrates friendship's ability to transcend ~~social~~ ~~attract~~ extreme social ~~str~~ change. Crucially, when Offred sees Moira arrive in the Red Centre she describes how "it makes me feel safer, that Moira is here." Atwood conveys the security that these "flashes of normality" can bring. When ~~under the~~ enclosed in the oppression of "barbed wire" and "cattle-prods" as Offred feels "ridiculously happy" to be united with her "best friend". Similarly, Shelley also presents the elation that can be elicited from the reconnection of friendship in times of distress in chapter five when ~~the~~ as Henry arrives in Ingolstadt with the effect of dispelling Victor's "horrors and misfortune" with his "delight in seeing Clerval." ~~Clerval's~~ ^{Shelley's portrayal of this} ~~favorable~~ ^{benign} "benevolence of Henry's "own good fortune" ~~highlights the~~ ~~very~~ ~~imply~~ ~~highlights~~ the integrity of their friendship and platonic love for one another, ~~reinforced later when~~ which Shelley reinforces later as "Henry was my only nurse" to "the commencement of a nervous fever" engendered by ~~&~~ Victor's ~~hatred~~ of himself in creating the Creature. In ~~is~~ demonstrating the potency of friendship in eradicating the "gloomy disposition" of Victor's mental state, ~~and this~~ Shelley may be encouraging companionship and solidarity in the society of the Regency period - one in which the government's Laissez-faire attitude towards

~~so~~ social inequality placed ~~essential~~ great necessity on acts of charity and philanthropy particularly from the upper classes. Therefore, through Shelley's evocation of friendship as restorative and cleansing, the novelist may be ~~perpetrator~~ encouraging this same benevolence in the more wealthy members of her readership. Likewise, Atwood through her presentation of friendship as a provider of consolation may be encouraging ~~social~~ benevolence ~~too~~ in 1980s society especially during the social upheaval of political divide under the Reagan administration of the 1980s America. Therefore, both writers ~~for~~ ^{may be} demonstrating friendship as restorative, in order to promote greater ~~so~~ social benevolence in society.

Atwood and Shelley both further this ~~of~~ incentive through their respective demonstrations of friendship's capacity to withstand hardship, in order to engender hope in their audiences which may amplify, or at the very least, encourage camaraderie ~~in society~~ and community in society. From Shelley highlights the strength of friendship through the emotional connection between Victor and Walton in the epistolary sections of her ~~novels~~ novel, dedicated to Walton's commentary. Crucially, Shelley ~~forms~~ founds Walton's characterisation on ~~the~~ his

desire for "a friend who would have... eyes that reply to mine", and "appear". Consequently, as Shelley unveils Walton's delight in experiencing this friendship, the writer highlights ~~how~~ how friendship can pervade even "the icy climes" of the Arctic and "starvation" to provide a "brother of my heart" to Walton. ^{Through Shelley's use of setting, the writer} ~~this scene~~ engenders a hope in the reader that friendship can prosper and ~~be~~ be conceived in ~~even~~ even the most extreme and desolation. ~~Whilst Atwood does not reflect the Shelley demonstrates the environmental strength of~~ Atwood similarly explores this environmental strength of friendship in her novel as the writer highlights how community can withstand society's pernicious attempts to dismember it. Perhaps the most significant example of this is the Mayday network of resistance ~~where~~ in which the friendships and "alliances" between Handmaids allows information to ~~spread~~ be exchanged in "whisper[ing] almost without sound", and ~~the~~ evading "the 'Eyes of God' which 'run all over the Earth'". When ~~the~~ Offred realises Offred's ~~not~~ involvement in Mayday and her ~~not~~ rejection of her "stinking" piety, ~~Atwood~~ Atwood alludes to the power that can be derived from crossing "the invisible line" of oppression through the belief in a community - ~~a~~ friendships - of resistance. In ~~even~~

highlighting the connection and potency of community, Atwood may be ~~highlighting how~~ ~~friendship~~ reflecting the importance of community contemporaneously, ~~considering~~ perhaps ~~a~~ reflecting, in true dystopian fashion, the prevalence of togetherness. For instance, the ~~communit~~ strength of the LGBTQ community following the rise of the homophobia of the ~~AA~~ AIDS epidemic or equally the strength of the Second Wave Feminist Movement ~~follows~~ in the face of the New Right opposition of women's rights and the Equal Rights Amendments. Therefore, both novels engender hope in resistance to oppression and environmental restraint through friendship.

Have ~~How~~ Importantly, however, both Atwood and Shelley both reflect a realism inherent to their presentations of friendship through their use of death to demonstrate the transience of friendship. ~~As Clerval~~ Following Clerval's death, Victor ~~et et~~ cannot endure "the agonies" of witnessing "the lifeless form of Henry Clerval"; and similarly, Atwood friendship between Offred and Offgun is terminated through ~~off~~ when Offgun "hanged herself" to escape the wrath of the Regime. Consequently, both writers may be

warning of the realistic transience and
thus value of friendship in society and
the sustenance of the human condition.



This response approaches the question in an interesting way, focusing on the functions and impact of friendships rather than being driven by examples of particular pairings of friends. Friendship is variously explored as restorative, empowering and transient.



Remember that there are many different ways of approaching the same question. Think about what you want to say about the theme overall in your two novels as part of your planning.

Question 9

Question 9 asked candidates to explore the presentation of characters who deviate from social expectations. Candidates responding to this question generally wrote very well about the social, cultural and historical contexts which fed into societal expectations, and the ways in which characters challenged or deviated from these. An impressive range of pathways were taken to explore this question, including social non-conformity and rebellion, deviations from gender and class expectations, supernatural transgression, criminality and acts of violence, and linguistic and structural deviation.

Some candidates focused on the supernatural entities and the ways in which they were presented as unconventional or transgressive. Others explored ideas around queerness and sexual identity, which were particularly well explored when comparing *The Little Stranger* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Many candidates grounded their arguments in ideas of social commentary, suggesting that authors were criticising aspects of society by presenting deviation from its norms. There was a tendency in some lower scoring answers to discuss context in rather general terms, particularly for the two Victorian texts.

Many candidates explored the crossing of literal and metaphorical boundaries, leading to thoughtful discussion of how social expectations are shaped by time and place; for example Harker's viewpoint being shaped by his 'civilised' English background, with his beliefs being challenged as he travels further east. Discussions of sexuality, morality and social class were all explored in detail, as was the idea that certain physical locations were associated with the breaking of social conventions.

Many interesting responses on *Beloved* were seen, often exploring the supernatural as a device to allow discussion of unspeakable acts and their consequences, with thoughtful links made to the legacy of slavery, and nuanced consideration of the social norms of the Reconstruction era and how these might themselves appear transgressive to modern readers.

This essay on *Beloved* and *Dracula* was placed on the border between Levels 4 and 5.

Both authors make use of ~~create~~ a variety of complex, multi-faceted characters who transgress societal expectations. By doing so, these characters challenge cultural boundaries, whether that's moral, bodily or spiritual. ~~Stoker uses~~ Both authors use ~~well~~ these characters as active channels for the supernatural, ~~at Stoker only~~ as Stoker uses his characters in ways that ~~as~~ accentuate gothic tropes and Victorian fears of degeneration, sexuality and foreignness, Morrison ~~reclaim~~ uses characters who transgress to ~~emphasise~~ force the reader to grapple with the historical violence of slavery and the necessary survival tactics it promotes.

Both authors use ~~characters~~ certain characters and their transgression beyond societal expectations as a gothic vessel for ~~reader~~ supernatural intrusion, more specifically intrusion of ~~body~~ the body. Where Stoker presents this bodily violation as monstrous and sexually charged, Morrison reclaims ~~the~~ bodily violation and emphasises internal trauma as a result of the

bodily ~~or~~ violation isn't caused by an external ^{supernatural} force, ~~if it is internalised within her~~ ~~and her the body is all for her~~, the source of corruption and intrusion is insular and integrated ~~in~~ deeply within ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~her~~ her society. ~~Settle's~~ Settle's back is described 'like a tree' or a 'choke-cherry tree' more specifically. This isn't a metaphor, but rather bodily violation incarnate, a physical manifestation of the scars of the ~~one~~ systemic brutality Settle has faced while being enslaved. Morrison uses her character to furthermore ask the readers to grapple with the unspeakable choices that mothers ~~both~~ ^{modern} were forced to face, defying all societal expectations of maternity. Morrison does this by using the harrowing example of Settle's infanticide, in which she ~~chose~~ 'took her babies and put them ~~somewhere~~ ^{some} somewhere safe.' ~~in~~ ~~Settle's~~ ~~this~~ ~~lines~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ Here, Morrison has reconfigured a historical account of Margaret Garner, who in 1856 escaped enslavement but then killed her children when she ~~was~~ was caught. Thus, Morrison ~~can~~ forces

the readers to ask how a society that normalises the ~~big~~ buying, selling, beating of ~~black~~ children creates circumstances where maternal love almost equates to murder. ~~this leaves other sense needed~~ thus, while Storer uses Lucy ~~as~~ as a character who was contaminated by the external 'other', forcing her to defy societal expectations, Morrison uses Sethe to emphasise ~~that~~ ~~her~~ intrinsic horrors internal to their society and that her infanticide ^{saddest} was a necessary protection of her children.



This candidate puts forward thoughtful arguments about the nature of transgression, with an interesting focus on the physical body as being violated in representations of women who deviate from social expectations. Contextual influences are very well incorporated into the analysis and discussion.

This response on *Beloved* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was awarded full marks.

In *Beloved* Toni Morrison utilizes a non-linear circular narrative in order to reveal the dark ^{past} ~~present~~ of slavery experienced by the "sixty million and more". She believes it is her authorial role to talk about a past "I don't want to remember, black people don't want to remember, white people don't want to remember." (a quote from an interview with Toni Morrison). Therefore, she tells the dual narrative both pre and post the American Civil War of 1861-1865 and the emancipation proclamation. Within this era, the North and South of America faced conflict due to the North's belief in the abolishment of slavery and the South's desire for it to stay due to their economic system relying on plantations of slave labour that provided tobacco, cotton and more. The society ran a Chattel Slavery, meaning slaves were treated and were expected to act as objects or belongings to the slave owner. The effects of this society become evident in Sethe who recalls a lesson from her slave

Master where he stated "put her human characteristics on the left and her animal ones on the right" By separating Sethe's ~~characteristics~~ and ~~being~~ zoomorphising her Sethe in her "animal characteristics" he Other Sethe and all African Americans as the whites ~~become~~ become the Self and believe they are only have "human characteristics". It is evident Sethe internalizes this when she later states, "~~They~~ 'They dirty you', the use of the euphemism 'dirty' in response to the cruel aspects of slavery shows her attempts to not remember but also ~~conceal~~ ~~conceal~~ as used as an adjective to connect Sethe's internalization of the belief she is dirty, impure and an Other. This may link to W.E.B DuBois's theory of double consciousness that suggests a black African American internalize the whites view, "this sense of looking at one's self through the eyes of the other". Sethe has internalized the white American view. In a similar manner, Oscar Wilde was his novel as a critique his own philosophy of aestheticism, a popular belief in the 1860s-1900s that broke away from Victorian industrialisation and focus on "art for art's sake", stating art derived no deeper meaning than its beauty. Wilde's novel is set in the Victorian era where society expected men to appear moral and good and never succumb to their own "sensations". Dorian Gray is presented as having a dual influence from Lord Henry and Basil Hallward who encourage him to both live for senses (Henry) and return to morality (Basil). Ultimately, Dorian transgresses into Henry's ideal and

deviates from societal expectations. Perhaps, this is most obvious in Deron's idolatrous behavior of his prayer or deal with the Devil seen in the Faustian Pact. He states "I would give my soul" in order to ~~rea~~ have "beauty ^[that] never dies". In this sense, Wilde personifies "beauty" as he suggests it can never "die" and by creating it as not only human but an immortal being, connotating God-like characteristics, he suggests Deron has ~~see~~ betrayed Victorian high praise of remaining purely Religious and has betrayed societal expectations by praising beauty, the sin of idolatry, and giving his "soul" away. Unlike Oscar Wilde's immediate portrayal of ~~secret~~ deviation from societal expectations, I believe Beloved demonstrates this. When considering the chronological events in the narrative, in the milking of Sethe Sethe recalls how "they took my milk", in which the "milk" acts as both a motif and zoonorphic comparison where she is forced, suggested by the verb "took", to be like a docile cow who is utilized by ~~the~~ its owner. It is also a symbol for Sethe's maternity, as she obsesses over the loss of milk it demonstrates she gained a consciousness and believed she had a purpose outside of slavery in her children.



In this part of the essay there is a very sophisticated interpretation of Morrison's narrative methods, woven into a detailed and knowledgeable discussion of the contextual influences of both writers. The philosophical grounding frames the essay's exploration of deviation from social norms in the novels within wider societal debates.



Focusing on not just how characters deviate from social norms, but why the writers have presented them this way was often a successful approach for this question.

Question 10

Question 10 considered the presentation of masculinity.

Many candidates focused on the ways in which male characters were presented as unconventionally masculine, or as having their masculinity threatened or challenged, for example looking at Harker's emasculation in *Dracula* or the stereotypically feminine descriptions of Dorian Gray as challenging Victorian ideals around masculine heroism, sexuality and emotional stoicism. One thoughtful answer on *Dracula* discussed the social importance of strong masculine men who are able to equally fight, study and hunt, making them fit in their role as patriarchs, and the role of the vampire in threatening their cultural and social hegemony. Others explored the emasculation of the enslaved men in *Beloved*, despite Mr Garner's assertion of the superiority of 'Sweet Home men'. There was some excellent discussion of Paul D's silence and repression as a consequence of abuse, and his sexual encounter with Beloved as a catalyst for social healing and reclaiming of masculinity. Others saw the same scene as another aspect of Paul D's disempowerment as his loss of power and control reveals the impact of slavery on his sense of manhood and self.

Many candidates also explored masculine traits as explored in female characters, considering how boundaries were blurred between the two, particularly as related to power dynamics. Candidates considered the strength and power of Caroline Ayres being diminished through the Faraday's narration by describing her using masculine epithets and presenting her as unattractive, comparing her to the female vampires in *Dracula* who were interpreted as usurping masculine roles in their active sexuality and assertiveness, or to Mina Harker, who was seen by one candidate as embracing the positive masculine attributes of the New Woman such as resilience and pragmatism.

Weaker responses tended to focus more on the presentation of male characters, rather than interrogating their masculinity. It was also sometimes seen that candidates struggled to stay focused on the topic when writing about female characters, and tended to drift into discussion of contextual societal expectations of women and femininity, rather than focusing on those of men and masculinity.

This answer on *Beloved* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* gained marks in the middle of Level 4.

However, while masculinity is seen to be abnormal within both A Picture of Dorian Gray and Beloved, both authors still emphasise the hegemonic nature of masculinity as these stereotypically effeminate men still hold ultimate predominance over women.

Paul D is presented by Morrison to still retain control over Sethe as a ~~way~~ ^{way} to reassert his masculinity. Paul D says to Sethe "I want you pregnant" disregarding her traumas associated with motherhood and instead focussing on gaining something that was "his own". Morrison constructs Paul D as using Sethe to justify his own masculinity, reasserting his masculine prerogative over her to have a child. Morrison goes on to emphasise the plight of women at the hands of masculinity, after Paul D is told about the murder of Sethe's ~~own~~ 2nd child, he states "You got two legs Sethe, not four" re-exposing Sethe to the dehumanisation she faced while within the institution of slavery. When he finds she killed her third child in an act of defiance, Morrison ^{parallels} ~~parallels~~ Sethe to Margaret Garner, a slave woman who escaped, but when caught over the fugitive slave act (FSA) attempted to kill herself and her children to avoid being recaptured as slaves. Morrison ^{the reader} ~~has~~ ^{has} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~reader~~ ^{reader} ~~question~~ ^{question} Sethe's morality, as Margaret Garner's can be questioned, however, in ~~Paul D's~~ Paul D's criminalising statement, she clearly illustrates the masculine view of the action: that it was criminalistic. Morrison displays that Paul D cannot understand Sethe's action as, although he is a black man who has experienced slavery, he is not a mother. Thus, Paul D attempts to assert masculine authority over a woman who

he cannot understand as she has broken from the illusory view he held of her as the "pretty little slave girl" in ~~becoming~~ ^{becoming} a murderer. Comparably, Wilde ~~presents~~ ^{presents} Sybil as ~~breaking~~ ^{breaking} free of social convention, creating a microcosm of the punishment women face at the hands of the patriarchy when they are seen to defy masculine power. In an intertextual reference to *The Lady of Shalott*, a 19th century ballad by Tennyson, Wilde foreshadows Sybil's downfall and subsequent death when she proclaims to Derren she is "Stitch of shadows." ~~the~~ The lady of Shalott proclaimed the same, breaking free of her entrapment in a tower and subsequently died as she escaped. Wilde parallels this, having Sybil act like a "painted schoolgirl" ~~but~~ he gives her agency in her actions, subverting the usual portrayal of women in gothic literature where their primary function was in response to male action, as, although she acts badly to please Derren, it is an action she takes for herself. Derren, seeing her break free of the pedestal view of her he held as "Rosalind" and "Juliet" in *illusory* ~~no shadow~~ ^{no shadow} tragic heroines, discards Sybil as she defies masculine expectation. Wilde creates a microcosm therefore for women who defy masculine expectation in Victorian social circles, emphasizing their ostracisation at the hands of masculinity, displayed clearly as Wilde has Derren state "You have killed my love." The defying of masculine convention is punished in *Beloved* as it is by Wilde, in Vaurien's ambiguous move. Stamp states that he wanted to "snap" Vaurien's neck after her

sexual rapes by the white slave owner. Vashiti no longer
got the expectations Stamp held of her, stating he "had
let her in a gear" as the rapes were occurring,
displaying that they inhibited and ruined his love for her
through no fault of her own. Stamp could no longer accept
~~his wife~~ Vashiti, as she became, with the woman
he married, and thus punished her in "snapping" her neck.
~~Morrison~~ Stamp never receives no punishment for this, as
Morrison emphasises how masculine hegemony allows men to
avoid punishment for their crimes towards women as he states
he did not kill her, though she is dead. Morrison implies he
did kill her but dissociated the murder onto his old identity of
"Joshua" changing his name and absolving himself of the crime
when he became a freedman. Thus, masculine hegemony is
presented throughout both novels as it can be seen that
Wilde and Morrison emphasise the power of men over
women. Morrison's feminism is obvious, and she championed
intertextuality in all her books. Wilde's work is less obvious. The
presentation of Sybil as an agent of her own action may surely
have been superficial, ~~as would be~~ as would may have
Stamp's presentation as satirical, Stamp as agent to emphasise
Darras masculine prowess as a Byronic hero, however, Wilde
did have a keen interest in the Socratic movement, therefore
it can be argued that the presentation of hegemonic masculinity
in both novels was intentional by both authors as a way to
criticise patriarchal predominance within society.

To conclude, both authors present masculinity in their novels as inherently abnormal, subverting usual masculine presentation of their eras to critique the concept of masculinity, displaying its harmful effects on those who do not meet its criteria. However, both authors in a display of feminism ultimately ~~conclude~~ ^{conclude} masculinity is a hegemonic issue, that harms women as men seek to assert their predominance over the feminine when it steps out of the patriarchal hierarchy set by masculine powers.



This candidate writes a thoughtful and controlled discussion of masculine power and its effects, focusing on 'abnormal' versions of masculinity, and societal gender inequality. At times, the essay drifts into a discussion of the subjugation of women, which means that the focus on masculinity is slightly lost.



Make sure you stay focused on the exact question that has been asked.

This essay on *The Little Stranger* and *Dracula* was placed at the top of Level 5.

In both 'Dracula' and ~~'1984'~~, Stoker and Waters explore the expectations of masculinity under the patriarchal power structures of late Victorian and post-WW2 Britain respectively. Whilst Stoker, a late Victorian writer, takes a more conservative view, lamenting the loss of male power and appraising its restoration, Waters, a postmodern writer, adopts a more progressive approach, criticising the patriarchal expectations of masculinity and the men who enforce this patriarchal power.

In 'Dracula', Stoker ~~arguably~~ criticises female sexuality as a threat to masculine power. In Chapter 3, Harker is ~~arguably~~ emasculated by the

three female vampires, rendered powerless to their alluring sexuality due to having "fallen asleep". Stoker employs heavily sexualised imagery as Harker, in his journal, describes the vampires' "voluptuous lips" and ~~the~~ teeth "like pearls". This sexual allure is accompanied with arguably diabolic imagery; the vampire's "eyes" are said to be "red" and their lips to be "ruby". The repeated reference here to the colour red could symbolically tie female sexuality to sin and the devil, ~~proposing~~ suggesting it is a dangerous threat to masculine power. Stoker's ~~own~~ repeated use of oxymoron as Harker describes the vampires as both "thrilling and repulsive" and reveals "some living and at the same time some deadly fear" could arguably highlight the masculine hypocrisy of both ~~the~~ denouncing and enjoying liberated female sexuality. However, this interpretation ~~arguably~~ perhaps ignores the general narrative of the novel, in which Harker is ~~proposed~~ a protagonist who helps defeat the threat of the ~~the~~ count. ~~Stoker could, therefore, be~~ criticising the emasculating power of the 'new woman' emerging in fin-de-siècle England. Whilst the 'new woman' was not treated as an inherent threat in the ~~late~~ Victorian Society - Miss for example, embodies the 'respectable woman' due to her competence with "shorthand" and "typewriters" - ~~she~~ ^{she} was often associated with the dangerous sexuality Stoker depicts. ~~Stoker could therefore be~~ criticising liberated female sexuality, and the ~~the~~ threat it brings to the lay-standing power of masculinity.

This idea of Jonathan being emasculated is perhaps reflected by Waters in her explanation of Roderick's masculinity. ~~Waters~~ Waters' characterisation of Roderick centres around his "mental illness", with every mention of him either highlighting his "nervous trouble" or the effects of it; Faraday in Chapter 1 describes him as "suspicious" and ~~anxious~~ ^{anxious} with "a touch of languor". Throughout the ~~the~~ novel, Faraday, Corrine, and Mrs Ayres describe him with ~~the~~ the epithet "boyish", ~~infantilising him~~ infantilising him. As a man in 1940s Britain, Roderick's

patriarchal role is to be the "master" of the house and "manage the finances". Therefore, through these infantilising epithets - and, for example, the simile in Chapter 6 comparing Roderick's attempt to diminish the perception of his "war-shock" to a "school boy trying to play down a bad school report" - Waters could perhaps suggest that he is unable to fulfill his patriarchal duty, thereby emasculating. This is further reinforced by the way Roderick is presented in Waters' typically postmodern first-person, unreliable narration from Faraday's perspective. Faraday frequently brands Roderick with the epithet "hysterical" due to his "mental illness". Throughout literary history, hysteria has been a technique used to ~~delegitimize~~ invalidate the accounts and experiences of women; by, ~~however~~ in a typically postmodern fashion, subverting this literary trope, Waters could be presenting Roderick's PTSD as emasculating. If in ~~Stoker's~~ 'Dracula', Stoker criticises ~~the way~~ Harter's emasculation itself, Waters perhaps criticises the fact that "mental illness" is viewed in 1940s Britain, but equally in 2000s Britain when the novel was published, as emasculating, criticising the patriarchal expectations of masculinity. Through the characters of both Seely and Caroline, Waters suggests that the "Hundred's ghost" is the result of a "repression" of psychological trauma; Waters could, therefore, be using the "ghost's" violence - such as the "fire" and the Gypsies' "attack" on Gillian in Chapter 3 - ~~to~~ to warn against the ~~the~~ masculine expectation to repress one's emotions and fight against the patriarchal role men are expected to play.

Stoker, however, arguably takes the opposite viewpoint, appraising the patriarchal power structure of 1890s Britain. ~~He~~ Stoker uses parallelism between Harter's aforementioned attack in Chapter 3 and Lucy's annihilation in Chapter 16. Where in Chapter 3, ~~to~~ Harter was rendered powerless to a group

of women, subverting the accepted patriarchal roles of Victorian Britain. However, in Chapter 16, Lucy is made powerless to a group of men. Stoker uses sexuality as a form of violence, like in Chapter 3, although here this is achieved through the phallic imagery of Hammer "driv[ing]" the stake "deeper and deeper", and the act of "stuff[ing]" Lucy's mouth with "garlic" could be viewed as a symbolic act of silencing. If one were to read this passage in isolation, one could view this attack on Lucy as a criticism of masculinity encouraged hence against women, ~~however~~ ~~Stoker does not give any suggestions th~~ reflecting Waters' criticism of the patriarchy. However, Stoker does not provide any suggestion that this attack is morally representing, wrong, instead perhaps presenting it as justified: in the previous passage, Lucy's vampiric manifestation, a horrific subversion of Victorian ideals of maternity as she attacks a "child" for its "blood", and is arguably aligned with the devil as Stoker ~~exp~~ employs an oxymoron describing her voice as ~~diabolical~~ "diabolically sweet". One could therefore view this attack on Lucy as a triumphant reclamation of the masculine power that was lost in Chapter 3; this is perhaps amplified by Stoker's decision to write this passage through the narrative voice of Dr Seward - the use of a doctor's perspective gives ~~medical~~ could give medical and scientific justification to this ~~restoration~~ ~~rest~~ restoration of patriarchal power. Stoker could therefore be appraising this dominant masculinity demonstrated through the crusading men in their mission to restore Victorian societal normality.

This idea of reclaiming patriarchal power is perhaps echoed by Waters in 'TJS' through her presentation of Faraday's masculinity. Whilst in 'Dracula', Stoker's multiple perspectives in the epistolary form ~~present~~ allows the events ~~and~~ to be depicted as factual and unbiased, in

'T.S.', Waters' typically postmodern unreliable narration allows Faraday, as a character, to skew the reader's perceptions of women and ^{restore} ~~ignore~~ his masculine power. ~~Waters~~ Waters frequently uses direct and reported speech to allow Faraday to manipulate perceptions of the women in the novel; in Chapter 14, when recounting Dr Graham's report of Betty's account of Caroline's death, Faraday uses an entire paragraph of reported speech, with the exception of the direct quote of Graham describing Betty as "beyond hysteria". Elsewhere, he directly quotes Dr. Seely describing Mrs Ayres as "hysterical"; ~~whereas in Dracula~~ in *Dracula*, doctor's perspective is used to create validity, whereas in 'T.S.', Faraday attempts to use this for the same purpose, which ultimately decrease the reliability of Faraday's account as he perhaps skews the perspective of women. In the 1940s, women were ~~allowed~~ given increases in education, with all British universities accepting women by the end of the decade. One could therefore view Faraday's attempt to devalue the perspectives of women through the apparent intellectual superiority of doctors as an attempt to reclaim the patriarchal power many men felt they had lost in post-WW2 Britain. However, Faraday perhaps reclaims his power not just through intellect, but through violence. Waters never explicitly explains Caroline's death. However, the vague atmosphere ^{achieved} ~~on the night~~ of Faraday's narration on the night of her death - through the dream-like imagery and simile comparing the night to an "oddly developed and slightly unreal" photograph and the repetition of "I think", as ~~the~~ well as Betty's account that Caroline's last word was an exclamation "you!" and ~~the~~ Faraday's remark in the denouement that he sees ~~an~~ only "the" "face" in "window-pane" rather than the "ghost" he was expecting - could imply that Faraday is responsible for her death, perhaps foreshadowed by the fact that

he "grab(s) her wrists furiously," following her rejection of him in Chapter 14. ~~As~~ Waters arguably crafts Faraday as an emblem of the hegemonic masculinity that permeated post-WW2 Britain, ~~as~~ criticising the male desire to gain and maintain patriarchal power even in the post-modern era in which she writes.

Ultimately, both writers present vastly contrasting depictions of masculinity. Whilst Stoker arguably presents it as a force of good, appraising the 'natural' ~~as~~ ^{masculine expectations} roles of the patriarchal system, Waters perhaps criticises these power structures, not only criticising the men that uphold ^{them} ~~it~~, but also the harmful effect ^{they have} ~~it~~ has on the men who cannot conform to them.



This candidate puts forward a very strong opening critical argument, asserting an overall interpretation of the texts portrayal of masculinity. This argument is thoroughly exemplified, with detailed textual analysis and close reference to contextual influences. This is a good example of a candidate who has analysed the presentation of the female vampires in Dracula, while maintaining a focus on masculinity (the masculine traits of the vampires themselves, and the threat they present to Harker's masculine power).

This response on *Beloved* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was awarded full marks.

Hegemonic masculinity pertains to an ideal that men are designed to embrace role of power and domination and women, as their secondary, should yield to this dynamic, and become subservient to the male rule. However, both Wilde and Morrison seem to pervert this dynamic ~~in their~~ through their construction of influence in both respective novels. In 'The Picture of Dorian Gray', Dorian is forced to embody the feminine character of himself in response to Henry's domination of the exposition of the text. In the opening of the novel, Wilde first introduces Lord Henry, ~~and Basil~~, who ~~do~~ who dominates the lexicon of the ~~the~~ opening chapter with sweeping statements about women and their inferiority within society. Dorian, who is introduced midway through this chapter is rendered secondary to the dominance of Henry and therefore is forced to occupy a secondary position, despite being the eponymous character of the novel. Dorian's feminisation through his subsistence offers Wilde's inverted notion of the hegemonic ideal, one in which the male form occupy the female space. The effeminate nature of Dorian Gray is further expressed through the adulation from Basil and Henry, the older men, to Dorian. Basil's use of the command 'Turn your head a little to the right' followed by

the inmate 'like a good boy', consolidates Duncan as the inescapable portrait of femininity, thus providing an extreme version of the Hegemonic ideal. Manson portrays a similar version of traditional male role through her characterisation of Paul D. The version manifests through Paul D's apparent feminine traits, such as his emotional intelligence to "produce the feeling you were feeling", providing him with a softness that does not conform with the typical structure of Hegemonic masculinity. Like Duncan, ~~the~~ Paul D's effeminate form emerges from external influence with his ~~not~~ formed from his experience of sexual assault as part of the Chain gang. Paul D's loss of masculine power is conveyed by Manson in her use of the inmate "like a rag doll... picked up and thrown about by a girl young enough to be his daughter". Paul D's degeneration from man to 'rag doll' ~~pro~~ perhaps the extent of slavery as an emasculating presence, one that weakens men ~~it~~ into malleable, maimed objects such as 'rag dolls'. Paul D's loss of masculinity echoes comments from Anthony Trollope's racial commentary, in which he argues that 'black is the apogee of the commodity', elucidating the connection between Paul D's emasculation for the exploitation of enslaved peoples as the commodity ~~stage~~ during the horror of America's slave market. Whilst Duncan's loss of masculinity occurs

to be a subtle extreme inversion of Hegemonic masculinity, the pervasiveness of Donai's feminisation is debatable as he adopts Henry's opinions of women and channels them into becoming the other extreme of masculinity. Henry's grammatical language is stating that 'Women as a decorative sex' so is woven into Donai's language through use of triplet 'I want to use them, enjoy them, and dominate them', shifting his feminisation onto the women around, restoring an extreme form of Hegemonic masculinity. Donai's disavowance of his effeminate label allows him to commodify the female whereas Paul/D's renders him as the commodity. Wilde's shift from femininity to masculinity in Donai's character may be compounded from his own experiences at Mandelin's college, Oxford where the affect of pederasty was common between older and younger men. Donai's breakthrough from Henry's influence whilst maintaining Henry's school of thought mimics Wilde's experience under Walter Pater, where some of Pater's views on art for art's sake were later integrated into Wilde's own & work long after establishing an individual identity. The ~~and~~ meaning of masculinity for both Wilde and Menon often a perspective on the ~~as~~ demobilising effect of society on masculinity.



This candidate pins down exactly what aspects of masculinity will be examined at the start of the essay, before deconstructing how the authors have questioned conventional notions of manhood and masculinity. In this section of the essay there is an evaluative discussion of the emasculation of the central male characters, and the feminised language utilised by the writers.

Question 11

Question 11 asked about the presentation of hope.

Candidates were generally able to consider the aims and intentions of the authors when considering the presentation of hope, exploring how hope can be found in the worst of times, and the progression of hope and its loss in the narrative arcs of various characters. Many candidates engaged closely with AO2 by exploring the use of settings and weather, and the symbolic use of children to indicate hope or the lack of hope. Others explored the role of female friendship in creating hope, and the ways in which the endings of the texts often offered hope for some even at moments of tragedy or death. Many considered ideas around freedom, identity and women's roles as related to hope.

A number of candidates writing about *Wuthering Heights* seemed unclear about the time setting of the novel, variously labelling it as Victorian, Elizabethan, Jacobean and Edwardian.

Some weaker responses on *A Thousand Splendid Suns* spent large parts of their essays on Mariam's status as a harami and her abusive marriage, alongside general contextual assertions, without explicitly connecting these details to the theme of hope. Better responses focused on the development of Mariam's hopes and disappointments, for example with Jalil and Rasheed and around her hopes for children and developing relationships with Laila and Aziza.

Mrs Dalloway was often noted as being a text where the woman has all her needs provided for yet somehow feels that she has lost her youthful hopes to live her life as she would have wanted to, and lives in a kind of 'golden cage'.

Comparison of the endings of the texts was often fruitful, for example considering the hope for the future created by Cathy and Hareton's relationship in *Wuthering Heights*, Mariam's sense of legitimacy and her self-sacrifice giving Laila and her children a hopeful future in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and the suggestion that Liza-Lu might be able to avoid the suffering of her sister in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, while Angel's recognition of his mistakes perhaps offers hope that society can also reform.

This essay on *Wuthering Heights* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was awarded full marks.

Text 1:

Wuthering Heights

Text 2:

A Thousand Splendid Suns

In both 'Wuthering Heights' and 'A Thousand Splendid Suns', Brontë and Hosseini present the way in which hope manifests in the form of progression, as the maturation of both individuals and generations instils a sense of hope for the future. While in both novels a lack of hope is initially illustrated, as female agency is reduced by both 18th century English society, and the Taliban's oppressive rule in Afghanistan, Brontë and Hosseini explore how hope can be acquired through ~~from~~ the development and alliance of female relationships, in contrast to the ^{apparent} volatility between women in 'Wuthering Heights'. However, both Brontë and Hosseini ultimately present hope as an empowering and liberating force, one that prevails in spite of the female protagonists' repressive, respective societies, and perpetuates female acts of defiance in both novels as women attempt to increase what little autonomy they

possess.

In both Brontë's 'Wuthering Heights' and Hosseini's 'A Thousand Splendid Suns', ~~a lack of~~ ^{the naivety of} hope is initially portrayed as both Mariam and Isabella ^{attempt to} maintain a sense of belief in their husbands. Under Taliban rule in Afghanistan, the notion of female subjugation and male superiority was greatly encouraged and implemented throughout society, and thus Hosseini depicts Mariam's consistent attempts to conform to this social norm, as she maintains hope for Rasheed's character, ~~ex~~ dismissing his brutality as a natural connotation of masculinity in 20th century Afghanistan. Mariam's naive sense of hope is apparent as she ponders 'how could she fault him for being the way God created him?', with this rhetorical question imparting a defensive and loyal tone, ~~as she is~~ suggesting a deep hope and want for this brutality to be natural. Moreover, Hosseini's description may be seen to allude to a higher power, as Rasheed is afforded this superior God-like status, reminiscent of the inherent idolisation of men under Taliban rule. Similarly, in 'Wuthering Heights', a naive sense of hope is evident in Isabella's initial aspirations for her relationship with Heathcliff. Her initial sense of hope is corrupted by Heathcliff's unjust abuse as she ~~de~~ recounts the way in which she 'gave him [her] heart, and he took it and pinched it to death and flung it back to' her. Here, the

verb 'gave' suggests the hope that Isabella had in this union, which is soon exploited and distorted by Heathcliff's cruelty as he remains an ambiguous subversion of the Byronic hero. Additionally, the verb 'gave' may be seen to allude to 18th century English common law, in which all a woman had was effectively transferred to her husband upon marriage, and thus Isabella not only gave Heathcliff her hope and loyalty, but her very being. Moreover, the verb 'giving' suggests a deterioration, as in both novels the deterioration is the carelessness and brutality in Heathcliff's actions, establishing his disregard for her hope. Thus in both novels, the deterioration of hope is symbolised by the domestic abuse that the women were subjected to. In 'A Thousand Splendid Suns', Hosseini illustrates the way that 'Rasheed kept pushing the pebbles in her mouth', as the verb 'pushing' conveys a relentless brutality as the pebbles, once symbols of hope for Mariam's future, became destructive symbols of violence and a loss of agency. Similarly, in 'Wuthering Heights', Heathcliff expresses his desire to turn Isabella's 'blue eyes black every day or two', with the colour imagery of black connoting the bruising and suffering he would like to inflict on her. However, in both novels a sense of hope is regained as both women retaliate against such abuse, evident in the way that Mariam 'wanted him to see', and Isabella's

throwing a knife back at Heathcliff, subverting the Victorian ideals of Brontë's time of the 'Angel in the House', as hope is gained through her ~~act~~ defiance. Thus in both novels, a lack of hope is initially evident through the unjust suffering that females are subjected to, however, is gained through earned ^{and liberating} acts of defiance, increasing their autonomy.

Both Brontë and Hosseini explore the way in which hope manifests in ironic symbols of destruction and violence, such as through the motif of the gun. In 'A Thousand Splendid Suns', Marian's initial apprehension ~~and~~ to the gun is portrayed through the repetition of the noun 'safety', marking her unease at such a destructive object. Marian's initial fear of the gun is reminiscent of the fact that such a weapon could easily be turned onto her, as husbands maintained a dominant position over the wife in Afghanistan, perpetuated by the legality of corporal punishment in the home. However, this object of such destruction increasingly becomes one of hope and female power, as Marian notes how 'the grip felt smooth in her hand', as ^{Hosseini's} ~~this~~ increasingly detailed description alludes to her gaining hope through the acquisition of power. Similarly, Brontë explores the irony of gaining hope through the motif of the gun as Isabella 'survived the

weapon 'ingrissitively' and became aware of how powerful she would be to possess 'such an instrument', as the lexical choice of 'ingrissitively' suggests a sense of premeditation and hope as Isabella notes the autonomy that this object provides her with. This bold reaction juxtaposes that of Marianne's fear, illustrating the way in which the savage and untamed nature of *Wuthering Heights* has deprived Isabella of her once socially acceptable and proper status as a woman in the 18th century moors. Additionally ^{this depiction of the extremes that women were forced} ~~Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Hosseini's~~ to resort to in order to increase agency ^{and hope is} ~~is~~ ^{and choice} reminiscent of the little control that women were accorded in both repressive societies, as in Afghanistan, under Taliban rule, an estimated 80% of marriages were forced ones, illustrating the deprivation of choice and freedom afforded to women. Additionally ~~in both texts~~ while in Brontë's novel, the motif of clothing is employed in order to convey hope for Catherine's social advancement, in Hosseini's, the motif of clothing through the burqa is emblematic of a patriarchal repression of hope. For instance, Marianne the 'loss of peripheral vision was unnerving' and Marianne 'did not like the way, suffocating way the pleated cloth kept pressing against her mouth.

as this sensory language suggests a lack of hope for her individuality and freedom, as she is confined by her clothing. In contrast, in 'Wuthering Heights', the hope for Catherine's social progression into a more socially acceptable position in society is demonstrated through her transformation in appearance, alluding to ^{the} social mobility accorded by the Industrial revolution. However, Cathy's hope for progression is conveyed as malleable as her 'glistening eyes' are juxtaposed by the way that she 'dare touch the dogs lest they should faun upon her splendid garments, as the verb 'dare' suggests a fragility of her knowledge acquired hope for her reputation, inferring that it is easily sullied. Thus in both novels, iconic motifs are employed given their connotations of hope, as hope for the future and for individuals if found in symbols of destruction and oppression.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This is a wide-ranging exploration of the concept of hope, considering it as part of female defiance against societal oppression. Feminist readings of the texts are implicit in the interpretations put forward, and contexts are seamlessly woven into the response.

This essay on *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was placed at the top of Level 4.

The writers of the two novels present hope in relation to ^{change of location} ~~love and longing~~ in a well expressive manner through the use of ^{nature imagery} ~~emotional language~~.

Firstly, in Hardy's novel, Tess regains hope for ^{the positive atmosphere on her journey to} ~~live~~ through ~~love~~ at Talbothays Dairy Farm, ~~the~~ where she can erase her past trauma. Hardy cleverly executes hope simply in the name 'Dairy', which

Connotes innocence, youth and perhaps re-birth for Tess. On her way to the farms 'valley of Great Dairies', with the use of the degree adjective 'great' perhaps ^{foreshadowing} ~~presenting~~ the ultimate jubilation she will face, Hardy describes Tess's 'hopes mingled with the sunshine'. The use of the pathetic fallacy could imply that she has become one with nature and start a new life, with ~~the~~ the noun 'sunshine' using light imagery to ^{symbolise} ~~connotate~~ a profound new journey happy journey. Similarly, Hosseini also presents hope ~~in~~ with the change of location when Mariam leaves the ~~the~~ 'muddy' and ~~the~~ poorly settled 'Kolba' to go to 'Herat', where she was 'marvelously, an ordinary person'. The Juxtaposition of 'marvelously' and 'ordinary' illustrates ^{Mariam's hope} ~~that all Maria~~ and longing for wanting to live a ^{basic and} simple life ~~and~~ where she is not a 'clumsy little harami'. Both writers use nature imagery to present hope in the new location, 'Mariam saw flowers... tulips, lilies, petunias, their petals awash in sunlight', again the use of light imagery to signify hope and excitement. The asyndetic listing perhaps may ^{reflect} ~~direct~~ Mariam's hope for renewal ~~and~~ as this place contrasts with the 'rathore' kolba, a metaphor suggesting the suffering she has to go through. Therefore, it could be concluded that

both Hardy and Hosseini draw hope through the change of location as a metaphorical rebirth and renewal for the female protagonists, Marian and Tess. ~~to However~~ They also find resonance through using floral nature imagery, in Hardy's novel, Tess's excitement is also depicted through nature, 'There the water-flower was the Lily'. It is significant to note that 'Lily' is used in both novels, a flower which ^{symbolises} ~~denotes~~ youth and purity, creating a positive ^{feeling} ~~effect~~, especially in the Victorian era, where nature was very much romanticised to enlighten one. Hosseini also wants to present the beautiful part to Afghanistan through using lilies, connotating birth contrasting with the political turmoil of Afghanistan presenting death. However, the flower 'lily' is said to be poisonous as well, perhaps both authors want to foreshadow their female protagonists' hope being crushed slowly like a poison.



In this part of the essay the writer focuses on how the authors use settings to explore the theme of hope. There is particularly detailed AO2 analysis in this section, with a close focus on the writer's craft.



Connections can be made in a variety of ways; through themes, characters, contexts or, as in this example, through specific literary techniques.

Question 12

Question 12 considered the presentation of change.

A very wide variety of approaches were taken in answering this question, considering both changes for the better and the worse, individual changes such as those occurring upon marriage, and societal changes such as war and political upheaval and their impacts upon characters. Weaker answers tended to list examples of different types of changes, particularly focusing on how individual characters changed throughout the novels. More nuanced responses explored how societies could influence change, or indeed were in need of change. Explorations of generational changes in *Wuthering Heights* and *Mrs Dalloway* were often very interesting, as were responses considering how settings were used to signify both societal and psychological change. Some also considered how writers presented characters in order to influence or comment on wider social changes. Many candidates wrote thoughtfully about narrative voices and structure, for example considering how changes might be foreshadowed.

Another popular approach was to discuss the lack of change, for example interpreting Clarissa Dalloway as stagnating and trapped in *Mrs Dalloway*, or Heathcliff being unable to escape from the cycle of abuse and ostracization established in his childhood.

Many candidates wrote extremely well about the novels being set during times of social change, and the ways in which the authors positioned change as necessary, threatening, or inevitable. Contextual links were thoughtfully connected with aspects of the texts.

This response on *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Wuthering Heights* was placed at the lower end of Level 4.

Text 1:

Wuthering Heights

Text 2:

A Thousand Splendid Suns

Throughout both Emily Brontë's 'Wuthering Heights' and Khaled Hosseini's 'A Thousand Splendid Suns', change is presented to demonstrate the impact of societal expectations on the characters' life. This is seen through change in characterisation, as well as change in freedom and restriction. This may be influenced by Brontë's upbringing in a rigid Victorian Yorkshire society, or Hosseini's visit to Afghanistan in 2007 where he saw the impacts of rigid, life-changing control.

Both novels present change through the written characterisation of characters, by examining how changes in society and personal circumstances can exhibit change to someone on a

personal level in order to encapsulate how they change to conform to society. In 'Wuthering Heights', Brontë explores a change in the characterisation of Heathcliff, when originally he was belittled for being a "dirty, ragged, black-haired child" and a "gipsy brat", which demonstrates a negative semantic field and reputation because of his appearance. Brontë may be trying to encapsulate Victorian scepticism of race. However, this juxtaposes with his change in characterisation when his "transformation" ~~shows~~ highlights him to be "tall, athletic, well-formed man" despite his race. Heathcliff's change in characterisation was fueled on revenge and a desire for a respected reputation, which the cyclical listing explores through a change of negative to positive descriptions of Heathcliff. His change may also represent the industrial revolution which was allowing more social mobility. We also see a change in characterisation of Catherine when she stayed at Thrushcross Grange where "her manners much improved". This not only symbolises expectations of women in Victorian society, but also how the divide between Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross

Grange can have huge impact of changing a personality of such a strong, mischievous Catherine.

Similarly, in 'A Thousand Splendid Suns', Hosseini explores a change through the characterisation of Mariam and Laila, who like Heathcliff and Catherine who have to conform to Victorian gender roles and respectability, Mariam and Laila are forced to change to protect themselves from the abuse and restrictions of a patriarchal Afghanistan. Despite Laila previously being a liberal child ~~the~~ who was ["educated first,"] this rapidly changes with the death of her family to her agreeing to marry ^{conservative minded} Rasheed. "My answer is yes" - out of desperation to protect her unborn child who would be shamed for being born out of wedlock in a religious society like Afghanistan. Hawthorne may be trying to emphasise the sacrifices women had to make to improve chances of survival, which he would have experienced first hand on his trip to Afghanistan. Mariam's characterisation also changes through her lack of dialogue, after being forced into a marriage. Her ^{despite her desperation and plea to not "let them do this"}

Characterisation changes from speech to "thoughts", which may indicate how women were not expected to have their own opinions but to rather follow their husbands. This is reflected in 'Wuthering Heights' with the marriage of Isabella and Heathcliff, who he changes and controls all aspects of her life. The change in characterisation symbolises wider societal issues which would later intensify under the Taliban rule, making them further victims of change to conform to societal expectations. Therefore, both ~~Bronte~~ Bronte and Howells explore changes in characterisation in order to highlight how society can impact individuals.

→ but also a possible grief of her old life, where she was comparatively more outspoken demanding - "let me in the house" to see her father.



The introduction to this essay is rather general in nature, and doesn't really pinpoint exactly **what** changes to freedoms and restrictions are being discussed. The essay becomes more controlled after this, with the detailed AO2 analysis and discriminating links to specific contextual influences bringing it into Level 4.



It can be helpful to include contextual information in your introduction, but this must be relevant to the question and to the argument you are making.

This essay on *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Mrs Dalloway* was awarded full marks.

One way that both novels present change is through the physical transformation their characters undergo, in turn exposing their unique plights, ^{exacerbated} ~~as rooted by~~ ~~contexts~~ the impact of the contexts and eras in which

they were produced. For example, in 'Tess', Thomas Hardy focusses on the metamorphosis of purity undergone by Tess ~~employs an evocative use of Edenic imagery~~ which is emblematic of the novel's titular heroine. This is exemplified in the Chapter 11 where Tess is raped by Alec d'Urberville, as Tess begins the novel as an encompassing of traditional Victorian chastity - with the emphasis of her "large innocent eyes" and "white" frock, constructing an introductory image of angelic purity; she ~~is able~~ embraces the Victorian expectations of women to be chaste and naïve. Hardy utilises this initial description to create an image of Tess only to be broken, exemplified in Chapter 11 where Tess is raped by Alec d'Urberville. Hardy adopts the perspective of Alec as he leers solaciously over Tess's body, describing how she forms a "pale nebulousness at [Alec's] feet". The use of the adjective pale echoes the previous use of the semantics of the colour "white", however Hardy ~~also~~ transforms it into something which paints Tess as sickly, vulnerable and weak. Furthermore, the new "nebulousness" seeks to rob Tess of her humanity, as she has been turned from a girl into an entity - a "muslin figure" - to be used and commodified, reinforced by her positioning at Alec's "feet", literally at his mercy. This is expanded on by the voyeuristic descriptions of Tess in this cataclysmic moment - her "beautiful feminine tissue, sensitive as gossamer, and practically blank as snow" conveys how her ~~little~~ livelihood

is being stripped from her through the vacant passivity of the adjective simile "blank as snow" - the pure connotations of "snow" implying that she is an object meant to be defiled, as snow is trodden on - with the wolfish tenderness of the simile "sensitive as gossamer" reinforcing this; the ~~adj~~ noun "gossamer" further evoking imagery of ^{cobwebs} ~~insects~~ and insects - Tess is again dehumanised. This physical shift in how colour is used and manipulated in order to portray the burgeoning of Tess's tragic fate is reinforced by the injection of Edenic imagery as Hardy described how Tess "fell into reverie among the leaves", with the verb "fell" evoking the Biblical story of 'The Fall', and how Gre is portrayed as the arbiter of humanity's corruption through succumbing to temptation and vice, mirroring 'Tess'; however Hardy chooses to ~~put~~ place Tess in the passive role of the Apple rather than Gre - she is an object for consumption and defilement rather than a participant. This forms ~~the~~ a further example of Hardy's use of change throughout the novel, as ~~later~~ as Hardy describes her mouth "as red as a snake's". The imagery of a "snake" furthered by the bloody ^{cut} and ~~to~~ violent connotations of the colour "red" work in tandem to convey Tess's shift from victim to temptress - exemplified by Hardy's decision to zoom in on an erogenous zone of her body. ~~The overwhelming of~~ This physical transfiguration would have been ~~overwhelming~~ ^{extremely} impactful on a Victorian audience.

due to the overwhelmingly Christian values held at the time, making Hardy's evolving use of edenic imagery significant to how Tess's development is perceived.

Similarly, in 'MD', Woolf depicts change through the ~~gro~~ gruesome physical transformation of Septimus, who, like Tess, experiences a tragic emotional demise. This is instigated through Rezia's narration of her relationship with Septimus, as she thinks to herself that "she had loved Septimus; she had been happy; she had had a beautiful home" with ~~Woolf's~~ repetition of the past tense verb "had" conveying that her present situation is the antithesis of the idyllic relationship the two had once shared. This is juxtaposed by ~~Septimus Woolf's~~ gruesome descriptions of Septimus, that his "body was macerated until only the nerve fibres were left" and that "Red flowers grew through his flesh". ~~The Woolf's~~ notion of "red flowers" ~~relates to~~ evokes imagery of poppies and Flanders' Field - which ^{reflects} ~~contributes~~ the devastating impact that World War I had on the period in which 'MD' was written, which is reflected through Septimus. In this way, Septimus's body thus becomes the symbolic battlefield, ~~also~~ conveying that emotionally Septimus died in war, and is left merely a walking corpse, reinforced by the use of the visceral verb "macerated" which echoes the way Tess's fragile body as "sensitive as gossamer"

has too been destroyed. In both novels, the complex and intense descriptions of the effect that Tess and Septimus's respective traumas have caused is juxtaposed by the portrayal of their prior lives - like Tess's simple role as a village girl, just another part of a collective "white company", and the simplistic way Rezia describes her life with Septimus before World War I, with the repetition of succinct clauses reading as almost childlike, reflecting the impact war has had on everyone in the novel and in Woolf's own life. This reflects the Modernist style of 'MD' as the focus on the delicate emotional experiences of Woolf's characters and how they juxtapose completely contrasts Hardy as a sensation novelist.

Within 'Tess', there is one singular voice - reflective of how Hardy, as a male author, is likely more familiar with assuming control over a narrative. Whereas Woolf, a female Modernist writer, understands the need for having one's own voice and agency, resulting in the shifting narrative perspective (another way Woolf uses change within the novel). In this way, the physical desecration of the respective novel's characters is emblematic of their themes - 'Tess's' portrayal of a loss of innocence shaped by archaic Victorian views of female sexuality and virginity, and 'MD's' use of the War to create an intimate and realistic portrayal of mental illness and

how that causes a shift in one's life.

Another way both novels engage in the theme of change is through the evolution of their settings. ~~For~~ 'Tess' opens with the village of 'Marlott', where Hardy's narration takes on the role of a topographer and landscape artist, ~~detailing the~~ painting it as a "fertile and sheltered tract" of land, with this serene field of virginal imagery paralleling how Tess is introduced within the narrative, rooted in Hardy's own staunch opposition to the Industrial Revolution - resulting in his glorification of Marlott's agricultural and rural aesthetic. Throughout the novel, Hardy ~~echoes~~ the demise of Tess through the slow Industrialisation of the novel's settings, such as his description of the "red reaping machine" in chapter 14, noting how Nature is "put to death" by its "teeth". This description follows Tess's rape, ~~great~~ strengthening the bond between Tess and Nature through the way that ~~the~~ the natural world's coveted virginal beauty is itself raped by the animalistic, carnivorous "teeth" of a "red machine" ~~that~~ conveying Hardy's evolution of the ~~red~~ motif as the colour "red" - which reflects Alec. This is ~~foretold~~ ~~is~~ cemented by Tess's death, as she is killed in a "Gothic erection" ~~to~~ that is "bespeaking captivity."

made of "red-brick". Not only does this serve the function of creating a cyclicality with the way "red" is used as a motif - initially a hint at Tess's eroticism, now an embracement of her perceived 'impurity' - but the industrial and ^{metropolitan} mechanical aesthetics of where Tess is killed ~~reflects~~ ^{mirrors} concludes the way that like Tess, the ^{transient} "Natural world has been stripped of its purity and ~~its~~ divinity - echoing Hardy's ^{belief that} ~~remote desolation of~~ London is a "monster with four million heads" (a remark made outside of 'Tess'). ~~This marks~~ The original connotations of Marlott as a "~~sheltered track~~" "fertile" track which is an open natural setting juxtaposing the claustrophobia of "~~the~~ the building" "bespeaking captivity" portrays how Hardy engages with change through setting in order to portray the narrative destruction of innocence - largely shaped by his own views.



A variety of aspects of change are explored in this answer, including the physical changes characters undergo, changes in settings, and attitudes towards change. While ranging widely throughout both texts, the candidate maintains a sharp focus on the idea of change and how it is being explored and conveyed.

Paper Summary

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

- Plan your responses carefully, ensuring that your answer is focused closely on the question asked.
- Ensure that you are closely analysing the methods and techniques of the authors of their novel in detail. AO2 was sometimes insufficiently detailed.
- Use regular, specific examples and quotations from the texts to support your ideas.
- Consider how contextual influences have shaped the texts and your responses to them, avoiding generalisations.
- Pay careful attention to your introductions, outlining a clear argument, and shaping the essay to come.
- Consider the texts as a whole, and the messages or ideas writers might be trying to explore around the topic in the question.

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