Trial Examination 2020

Sample essays

QCE English Units 3&4

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ABOUT THE SAMPLE ESSAYS

The sample essays in this booklet are not intended to be prescriptive. Each essay represents one possible way a student may construct an informed and critical perspective in response to the question.

The essays include page numbers for quotations from the prescribed texts. The editions of the texts are listed on page 50. Students are not expected to include page numbers in their essays; these have been included for your reference only.

As no instrument-specific marking guide is provided for the external assessment, the sample essays are written in accordance with the assessment objectives for the examination task, as provided in the syllabus. The assessment objectives are listed below. Note that the specific content targeting criteria 1–8 are annotated alongside each essay, and criteria 9–11 are consistently shown throughout each essay.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task
2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers
3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text
4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions
5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text
6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task
7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes
8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay
9. make language choices for particular purposes in an essay
10. use grammar and language structures for particular purposes in an essay
11. use written features to achieve particular purposes in an essay

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SAMPLE ESSAYS

Burial Rites by Hannah Kent

a) How is the reader invited to view the influence of the Icelandic landscape in *Burial Rites*?

Set against a haunting backdrop of the harsh and vast Icelandic landscape, Hannah Kent's *Burial Rites* explores the equally harsh and vast ways the environment affects the lives of the novel's characters. By lavishly describing the landscape, weather and setting, Kent explores how her complex protagonist, Agnes, responds to her external circumstances, thereby revealing her inner turbulence. The coldness and hostility of Illugastadir also mirrors what Kent conveys to be profoundly unjust societal prejudices that are as inescapable as the environment.

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The reader's perception of the physical and social landscapes in *Burial Rites* is primarily formed by Agnes's narrative perspective. The prologue warns the reader of the impending and inexorable conclusion – 'they said that I stole the breath from men, and now they must steal mine' (p. 1) – which immediately establishes a sense of vengeful justice and justification that will culminate in capital punishment. Kent also has Agnes invoke the ephemeral nature of life, likening it to a 'grey wreath of smoke … vanish[ing] into the air and the night' (p. 1), which both dehumanises herand implies that she is a helpless, fleeting presence amidst the vast Icelandic landscape. Often, Kent employs weather symbolism to draw connections between Agnes's inner and outer worlds; for instance, the death of her foster mother Inga is marked by a sky 'overrun with colours' that serve as a warning of an impending storm, for 'the northern lights always herald bad weather' (p. 143). The weather swiftly descends into an 'evil sight' with 'dark clouds', 'smoky blackness', and a 'fierce' wind (p. 144), and the sounds of Inga dying in childbirth mingle with the 'sound emitted by the wind and snow and ice' (p. 145), as Kent's polysyndeton emphasises both the overwhelming force of the weather and the overwhelming dread that Agnes feels as she loses her only source of maternal comfort. The intertwining of human and natural sounds occurs again when Agnes 'howl[s] like the blizzard outside' upon learning both Inga and her newborn died, and her foster father Björn's stoic response that 'maybe [Agnes] will die too' is a harrowing parallel of the cruel isolation imposed by the weather that prevented Inga from receiving medical help (p. 148). To this end, Kent uses the palpable visuals and sensations of Icelandic weather as a means of exploring the intangible inner worlds of characters grappling with the abstract notions of grief, loneliness and mortality.

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8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

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Burial Rites also forms associations between people and their environments, particularly in terms of Agnes's relationships with others. Agnes's description of Illugastadir as a place where 'only the outlying tongues of rock scarred the perfect kiss of sea and sky – there was no one and nothing else' (p. 248) underscores her isolation and alienation from others. The icy landscape becomes a motif of emotional coldness, highlighting how Agnes's unreciprocated feelings for Natan are akin to having 'no light to head towards in that wintered landscape' (p. 248). Agnes notes that Natan is 'changeable as the ocean' (p. 239), a simile that foreshadows his volatility and betrayal of her trust. Hence, Kent's characterisation of the text's landscape as a sombre, remote and unfamiliar place compels the audience to feel Agnes's sense of abandonment and distance. As the text progresses, both Agnes's execution and a long Icelandic winter draw near, and Agnes resigns herself to the fact that the ground will 'freeze and thaw again' (p. 319) as the cyclical natures of life and the landscape continue in perpetuity. Although Agnes does not survive the story, Kent perhaps implies that Agnes's story will be as eternal as the landscape.

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

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In accordance with Kent associating the power of stories with the power of the environment, the novel also explores how the natural landscape can provide some solace and catharsis, functioning as a vital source of memories. Early in the text, when Agnes is separated from people and the environment in a prison 'in darkness, in silence' such that she 'forg[ets] the smell of fresh air' (p. 18), we see her only solace is to 'imagine the valley in the long days of summer, the sun warming the bones of the earth … [and] the sky: bright, bright blue, so bright you could weep' (p. 19). This challenges the presumption that the world of the text is unrelentingly harsh and unwelcoming. But Agnes also derides the limited perspectives of characters like Steina who only know 'the tree of life' and have not been exposed to its 'twisted roots pawing stones and coffins' (p. 178), suggesting that even if the brutal realities of life for an impoverished woman in the nineteenth century were bleak, there was more virtue in acknowledging these realities than living in blissful ignorance. Agnes also takes refuge in naturalistic imagery when she is given her date of execution, describing how the 'darkening sky and a cold wind … passes through you as though it does not care whether you are alive or dead, for you will be gone and the wind will still be there' (p. 319). Though this could be interpreted as apathy for the significance of life, in the context of the novel this stream of consciousness almost revels in the beauty within this brutality. Hence, Kent invites the reader to see the Icelandic landscape through Agnes's eyes and appreciate it not in spite of its harshness, but because of it.

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Ultimately, Kent's crisp and incisive portrayal of the landscapes in *Burial Rites* aligns the reader with Tóti in sympathising with Agnes as she, much like the country's natural environment, is powerful, misunderstood, underestimated and indirectly responsible for tragedy. The novel therefore elucidates how landscapes and humanity are influential forces, capable of wreaking havoc but also providing solace.

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

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Burial Rites by Hannah Kent

b) Analyse the influence of Tóti on Agnes's development.

Although *Burial Rites* is ostensibly the story of the life and death of Agnes Magnúsdóttir, Hannah Kent's characterisation of Assistant Reverend Tóti Jónsson is central to the reader's understanding of the narrative. His role as Agnes's spiritual advisor as well as his own instinctive empathy allow him to earn Agnes's trust and align him with the reader as Kent reveals the truth and tragedy of the Illugastadir murders. As the novel progresses towards Agnes's inevitable execution, Kent explores the significance of Tóti's care and sympathy for Agnes despite her circumstances, inviting the reader to feel similarly invested in the development of her character.

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Tóti is introduced to the reader as a fundamentally compassionate character. When summoned by Blöndal's letter to meet with Agnes, he is mocked by his father Reverend Jónsson and even his own servant for being a 'mouse' chosen to 'tame a cat' (p. 10), though Kent subverts this animalistic metaphor with Agnes's insistence that 'they don't know [her]' (p. 29). The first chapter concludes with Tóti's whispered promise – 'I will save her' (p. 32) – though their first meeting is marked with awkwardness and misunderstanding as he 'nervously wipes the sweat off his upper lip' (p. 42), and Agnes's 'tongue … cannot be moved to form words' (p. 43). Tóti later confesses to God and the reader that he is afraid, not knowing 'what to say to [Agnes]', and struck by a feeling of 'horror' in her presence (p. 50). This rocky foundation makes the gradual growth of their relationship all the more impactful as the pace of the novel facilitates the development of a realistic, burgeoning mutual respect between the two. As Tóti becomes more willing to engage with Agnes on a human level, her 'inscrutab[ility]' (p. 81) fades, as he comes to accept that it was not 'God' who 'chose [him] to shepherd [Agnes] to redemption', but Agnes who 'chose' him because of a prophetic dream in which she walked with 'his hand in [hers], and it was a comfort' (p. 184). Throughout the novel, Kent encourages the reader to sympathise with Tóti as he uncovers Agnes's story, but not before dispensing with their preconceptions of the murderess. Hence, Tóti's role in the text is first to facilitate Agnes's openness, which later compels both Tóti and the audience to empathise with her plight.

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Moreover, Kent deftly integrates Agnes's voice among the narrative points of view in the novel to showcase how Tóti's presence as a listener to Agnes's story alters Agnes's own perspective. She contemplates whether Tóti 'sees [her] like that lamb' born during her time at Illugastadir – a 'Devil[ish]' creature with two heads that is killed 'on sight' because a farmer thinks it is 'cursed' (p. 101).

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

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This self-reproach signals the detrimental consequences of Agnes's life-long maltreatment in a prejudicial and patriarchal society, though this changes somewhat over the course of the novel. We also hear Agnes's apprehension in deciding to share her story with Tóti, as she frets over the thought of him being 'merely a gifted liar' (p. 101), compounded by her bitterness over how telling the truth has 'served' (p. 110) her thus far in life. It is only when she begins to authentically engage with him by discussing her views on the people who 'believe a thinking woman cannot be trusted' and a God who commands her to 'love' men who are 'hypocrites' that Tóti begins to understand her (p. 132). This complexity, as well as Agnes's tumultuous and tragic upbringing, renders Tóti literally breathless in prompting the narrative forward, asking 'what happened then' and 'realis[ing] that he had hardly breathed during Agnes's story' (p. 150). But that is not to say that Tóti's only function is to silently listen to Agnes. He gradually becomes more willing to challenge her assumptions, 'sho[oting] her a questioning look' (p. 136), and also defends her to Blöndal by informing the District Commissioner that she is 'well versed in Christian literature' (p. 165) and seems 'sincere' (p. 170) in her storytelling. Hence, Tóti plays a vital role in propelling the plot as well as enabling Agnes to critically examine her own culpability and conception of the world.

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> 1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

However, the dual perspectives of Agnes and Tóti also allow Kent to elucidate her protagonist's complexity and simultaneously foreshadow her demise. Often, after passages in which Agnes discloses an event from her past, Kent then incorporates Agnes's inner monologue to have her consider her words and their reception. Agnes repeatedly wonders what Tóti thinks about her, typically in the form of catastrophising, pessimistic assumptions like 'he thinks I killed the baby' (p. 150) or 'thinking of Natan and [Agnes]' (p. 194) and their sexual relationship, at one point even insisting that 'no one could understand what it was like to know Natan' (p. 218). However, Kent ironically undermines Agnes's belief that it was Natan who '*saw*' her and 'for the first time in [her] life … made [her] feel [she] was enough' (p. 221) by juxtaposing the selfish betrayal of Natan with the genuine empathy of Tóti, who is 'so kind' (p. 317) to her in her final moments. When Tóti is prevented from hearing 'the rest' (p. 292) of her story because of his illness, Agnes laments his absence, evident in her addressing him by prefacing paragraphs with 'Reverend', and 'imagin[ing]' his physical and emotional responses to her (p. 255). Meanwhile, Tóti's perspective oscillates between curiosity and inner conflict, as he becomes increasingly invested in Agnes's past and present, but also cannot escape the intrusive thoughts about her impending future and her 'pale neck against the grey of the rock' that will soon be 'slit' by the executioner's axe (p. 106). Nevertheless, he fulfills

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a promise to 'be there with' Agnes, their shared 'trembling' (p. 317) uniting them as he 'reassure[s] her with soft words' (p. 326) up until the 'sudden sound of the first axe fall' (p. 328). In their final moments, Tóti asserts that he 'won't ever let go' of Agnes, which is Kent's poignant distillation of the importance of memory and the importance of characters like Tóti being willing to listen and remember.

7. (cont'd) organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

Thus, *Burial Rites* showcases how Agnes and Tóti transform each other's perspectives and, in doing so, invites the reader to observe the importance of storytelling as a vehicle for expression and connection with others. To this end, Kent foregrounds Tóti as an empathetic listener and a vital part of her narrative in which characters can only be understood by those who make an effort to understand them.

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***Cat's Eye* by Margaret Atwood**

a) 'This is the middle of my life. I think of it as a place, like the middle of a river, the middle of a bridge, halfway across, halfway over.' (Elaine)

How is the reader invited to view the concepts of time and memory in *Cat's Eye*?

Margaret Atwood's 1988 postmodern novel *Cat's Eye* subverts the paradigms of time and memory to tell a unique story of interwoven experiences and long-lasting ramifications. Though Elaine Risley's childhood has clear and chronological consequences for the rest of her life, and the traumatic memories of her past reverberate in her present, the novel's retrospective narration adds layers of complexity to this as Elaine is shaped by her past memories and her ever-evolving attitudes toward them. In essence, the novel is a portrait of memories across time but also critically examines these constructs through Elaine's sophisticated self-reflection as shown through Atwood's nuanced writing.

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2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

From the outset, *Cat's Eye* is deliberately and overtly concerned with perceptions of time. The novel's epigraph quotes Stephen Hawking in questioning 'why do we remember the past, and not the future?', and its opening declaration that 'time is not a line but a dimension, like the dimensions of space' (p. 3) immediately invites the reader into a narrative that consciously examines and challenges our perception of time. Elaine's perspective that 'time … [has] a shape … you don't look back along time but down through it, like water' and, by extension, that 'nothing goes away' also introduce the notion of eternal memories and lasting consequences (p. 3). Elaine's highly astute and articulate awareness of her life and the 'place[s]' within her timeline, such as the 'middle of [her] life' being like the 'middle of a river [or] bridge', establishes her rich interior world, though she couples this with her self-consciousness of her perceived failure to have 'accumulated … possessions, responsibilities, achievements, experience and wisdom' by this supposed midpoint (p. 13). This represents a deeply internalised consequence of Elaine's preoccupation with self-image, instilled in her by the emotional abuse Cordelia inflicted. One of the overarching effects of this is that Elaine is 'not afraid of seeing Cordelia' but is 'afraid of being Cordelia'; she is worried that they've'changed places' as their lives diverged (p. 249). That this fear has persisted into Elaine's late adulthood is indicative of the power of her memories, aiding Atwood's depiction of how influence can transcend time and how decade-old memories can still affect one's present thinking.

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The interpolated narrative of Elaine's childhood and adulthood constantly reminds the reader of this temporal disparity. Atwood filters the entire story through Elaine's perspective and implies that Elaine has ruminated on her past so often that it is now a habitual and inextricable part of her inner monologue. By unconsciously remembering or deliberately reminiscing about the past, the novel's characters have the power to make the past more influential in their present and future. There are various patterns of behaviour and self-reproach that recur throughout Elaine's life, such as her preoccupation with her physical appearance in the eyes of others – a lingering effect of Cordelia 'whisper[ing]' imperatives such as 'Stand up straight! People are looking!' (p. 131). However, Cordelia's actions are also implied to be learned behaviours. In brief glimpses of Cordelia's home life, Elaine observes Perdi and Mirrie's occasional sly remarks and bullying of their younger sister, taunting her to 'pull up [her] socks' (p. 231) in ways that mirror Cordelia's efforts to exert control over her peers. When Elaine becomes a mother to two girls, she is keenly alert for any signs of such bullying, worried that her daughters could either be victims or perpetrators. Thus, Elaine's life is characterised by these repetitions, and Atwood suggests that no character can escape reverberating memories, no matter how much time has passed.

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Moreover, Elaine's willingness to engage with and ruminate over her past is somewhat detrimental to her in adulthood as she can lose herself looking 'down through it, like water' (p. 3). When attempting to conjure memories of her ninth birthday, Elaine fumbles around a 'receding darkness', desperately waiting to 'fill in the black square of time, go back to see what's in it' before visualising a 'thicket of dark-green leaves … a sad rich colour' (p. 116) and 'intergrown' vines 'so tangled over the other plants they're like a hedge' (p. 117). She then reveals that this is the 'wrong memory', one 'infused with grief' (p. 117), but the novel nevertheless goes on to delve into this memory in the next chapter. In this sense, the structure of the text can be interpreted as a relentless onslaught of memories into which Elaine 'descend[s]' (p. 14), powerless. Some memories 'drag [her] downward, into the layers of … liquefied mud' (p. 14) – this imagery links the idea of certain memories with connotations of dirtiness and sludge that form an all-encompassing mire. But these too come unasked for just as the discovery of the murdered girl in the ravine 'stirs up' memories and fears in Elaine 'like dead leaves' that she hasn't 'thought about in years' (p. 266). Likewise, the rediscovery of the symbolic cat's eye marble compels Elaine to 'look into it, and see [her] life entire' (p. 434). In the present, her aptly named 'retrospective' (p. 443) art exhibition evokes and propels her through these memories, with each painting steeped in highly personal meaning that Charna,

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the gallery organiser, misinterprets as political statements about grandiose ideas of gender and war. Hence, although Atwood extols the meaning-laden power of memories, she also highlights how their potency can be intoxicating to an individual despite outside perspectives. Thus, Elaine and the novel are steeped in memories that the ‘past-tense admiration’ (p. 451) of others cannot comprehend.

8. (cont’d) use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

Ultimately, *Cat’s Eye* uses temporal jumps in its narrative to elucidate the inescapable nature of memories and the unabating passage of time. Though Elaine’s storytelling is resolutely non-linear, the undercurrent of her mortality and ageing heightens the importance of her memories, as Atwood showcases how they still dominate her thoughts decades later. To this end, the novel reveals how memories and time are inextricably linked – the past influences the present just as present thoughts seek meaning in the past.

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Cat's Eye by Margaret Atwood

b) What do the conflicts between Cordelia and Elaine reveal about Elaine's identity?

In Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye*, Cordelia and Elaine's relationship is fraught with conflict and incredibly influential in both their lives. Cordelia, who 'made [Elaine] believe [she] was nothing' (p. 219) and – even more brutally – seemingly thought nothing of doing this, is initially Elaine's friend but quickly becomes a source of anxiety and even physical suffering for Elaine as Cordelia wields her influence in the form of social and emotional abuse. As an adult, Elaine remains in some ways enthralled and afraid of Cordelia despite their lack of contact, and Elaine's memories of her former friend are one of the most significant factors that shape her present identity.

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

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Elaine's childhood is initially rather lonely and deprived, though her friendships with Carol and Grace become a bastion of social development. Though Elaine is frustrated by the girls' self-deprecation in their art projects – they constantly insist 'mine's no good. Mine's *awful*' (p. 59) and implicitly pressure Elaine to do the same – she is far more perturbed, in hindsight, by Cordelia's tendencies. Cordelia's manner sets her apart from the others; she does not wave like Carol and Grace do but shakes hands when she meets Elaine and smiles 'like a grown-up … as if she's learned it and is doing it out of politeness' before immediately pointing out that Elaine has 'dog poop on her shoe' in a conspiratorial manner, creating 'a circle of two and tak[ing Elaine] in' (p. 77). This same voice is 'careful, precise, rehearsed, unrepentant' after Elaine's near-death experience in the ravine, and while Elaine still considers herself a 'coward' after this incident, she finds the strength to literally and metaphorically 'walk away from [Cordelia]', recognising Cordelia's voice as 'an imitation, it's acting … an impersonation of someone much older', and, even more importantly, that 'there was never anything about [Elaine] that needed to be improved' (p. 213). This is a pivotal moment in Elaine's development as she finds power in her 'indifference' to the trio and their 'need[y] … enticing [and] jeering' – their influence wanes and Elaine 'hardly hear[s] them anymore because [she] hardly listen[s]' (p. 214). Though she later falls back into Cordelia's orbit temporarily, this break signals a burgeoning self-awareness as Elaine begins to prioritise her own wellbeing over the fear of breaking Cordelia's metaphorical plates.

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

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Cordelia and Elaine's relationship is initially an empowering force for Elaine, who, in Cordelia's presence, considers the pair 'impervious' and 'scintillat[ing]' (p. 4). However, this is undercut by the foreshadowing remark that Cordelia 'can outstare anyone,

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and [Elaine is] almost as good' (p.4) with the adverb 'almost' hinting at the toxic insecurities that will later undermine their relationship and continue to affect their lives. In late adulthood, Elaine still has 'the need' to tell Cordelia 'whatever would make [herself] look good' (p. 6). Long after they graduate high school and part ways, Elaine's inner monologue is still peppered with subtly intrusive thoughts – 'I wonder if Cordelia will see this poster' (p. 21). Even her decision years later to give her children the 'sensible names' of Sarah and Anne is done with the ominous refrain of 'because look what happened to Cordelia' (p. 15). Atwood gently ridicules the notion that the sensible nature of a name could ensure a sensible or stable life, but she effectively characterises Elaine as a woman who is invested in such thoughts to rationalise her experiences and prevent history repeating. Elaine also attributes her self-harming tendencies to Cordelia's 'power over' her, noting that she would peel skin from her feet 'deliberately' and gnaw her cuticles 'without thinking about them' as evidence of both conscious and unconscious mutilation (p. 124). As a mother, she becomes mildly paranoid that her daughters are hiding the same behaviours; she worries that they are 'good at deception' (p. 129) just as she was. Here, Elaine rejects the notion that 'little girls are cute' and innocent – rather, she attests, 'they are life-sized', implying that they are just as complex and capable of hatred and toxic love (p. 129). Thus, while Cordelia's efforts to mould Elaine into a pawn were ultimately unsuccessful, their relationship succeeded in permanently altering Elaine's understandings of herself and of human relationships.

Atwood depicts Cordelia's pretence of self-improvement as a rationale for her treatment of others. Cordelia undermines their self-confidence but also shifts her personality such that it's 'hard to tell' which 'side' she is on in any given conflict (p. 139). Her dominance is palpable in the other girls 'glancing at [her] for approval' (p. 148), and Elaine's penchant for 'want[ing] to please' (p. 132) is easily manipulated under the guise of Cordelia wanting to 'help' Elaine by 'stand[ing] close beside [her] and whisper[ing] into [her] ear' (p. 131). This, coupled with Atwood's pithy remark that 'secrecy is important' (p. 131) to children, creates a sense of a pernicious, insidious relationship. Cordelia's 'alternat[ing] kindness and malice' become 'harsher, more relentless' as she tests the girls' boundaries with her emotional abuse (p. 171), compelling Elaine to faint on command and rallying Carol and Grace as accomplices who instinctively 'move … beside Cordelia' and 'away from [Elaine]' as a display of affiliation (p. 205). Consequently, later in life Elaine claims she 'know[s her]self to be vengeful, greedy, secretive and shy' (p. 170), but it is unclear how much of this has been defined by Cordelia as opposed to discovered without her influence. Ultimately though, the present Elaine is forced to acknowledge that despite her instinct to shout

3. (cont'd) analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

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‘damn you, Cordelia!’ over any minor grievance, the reality is that ‘Cordelia is long gone’ (p. 49). With her resonant command of ‘*You’re dead. Lie down*’ (p. 454), Elaine finally puts to rest this corrosive influence, though she still feels a sense of loss ‘not [for] something that’s gone, but something that will never happen’ (p. 462) in their long-dead, fractured friendship.

8. (cont’d) use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

Cordelia no doubt plays a defining role in Elaine’s life; however, Atwood implies that it is Elaine who magnifies this through her proclivity for invoking Cordelia’s memory and dwelling on their shared experiences. Hence, Atwood’s narrative encourages the reader to consider their own capacity to influence and redefine their lives, using Elaine’s character as a vehicle to explore the importance of self-actualisation and resolving the trauma wrought by others.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

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***Hamlet* by William Shakespeare**

a) How is the reader invited to view the notions of death and corruption in *Hamlet*?

William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is set in a rotten Denmark, plagued by deaths and murders that corrupt the body politic. The eponymous Hamlet is beset by an existential fear of mortality in the wake of his father's death, though his actions only exacerbate the corrupt state of the play. Motivated by an unfortunate pairing of revenge and madness, Hamlet's mind is permeated by notions of murder, which affects all the play's characters who serve as a microcosm for Denmark. Hence, the notions of death and corruption are inextricably intertwined throughout the play as Shakespeare explores their self-perpetuating relationship.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

Shakespeare's focus on corruption is most evident in his portrait of Hamlet as a character haunted by thoughts of death and who is both a victim of and a perpetuating force in Denmark's corruption. The primary source of this portrait is Claudius's regicide and the act of pouring a 'leprous distilment' (1.5.64) into King Hamlet's ear. This is described with visceral and guttural detail; the ghost recounts how it 'curd[led]' his blood and left his skin a 'vile and loathsome crust' – the reader is confronted by the literal corruption of King Hamlet's body (1.5.69–72). This is also conveyed to be a morally reprehensible act, for not only was the king killed by a trusted relative, he also died 'unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd' without the 'reckoning' (1.5.77–78) of his last rites. Hence, the ghost is relegated to the 'sulph'rous and tormenting flames' (1.5.3) of purgatory, wandering the battlements at night as a supernatural force that exacerbates the instability of Denmark by coaxing Hamlet to enact revenge as well as causing disquiet among Horatio and the guards who see the ghost and cannot glean its intentions. The death of King Hamlet is the catalyst for much of the play's action, and this corrupt act can only be set right by the tragic proliferation of deaths by poison in Act 5. Laertes's use of a poisoned rapier backfires when Hamlet stabs him with it, leaving him 'a woodcock to [his] own springe' – a clever reincorporation of the motivic metaplay *The Mousetrap* – and 'justly kill'd with [his] own treachery' (5.2.298–299). Claudius, for his more grievous sins, dies a death by double poisoning as Hamlet stabs him with the rapier and has him 'drink off this poison', commanding the 'venom' to its source (5.2.318). Although this marks an end to the play's 'mischance / On plots and errors' (5.2.386–387), there are innocent victims, as Shakespeare reveals how corruption brings about the deaths of the corrupted and uncorrupted alike.

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

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The tragic descent of Hamlet's mental state is also mirrored in Ophelia, whose madness parallels his. This is intended to be particularly shocking to readers past and present. Ophelia is initially presented as an archetypal Elizabethan ideal, exhibiting behaviours that were lauded in the sixteenth century such as obedience and submissiveness towards Polonius and Laertes. But she also exhibits some behaviours that would be lauded by contemporary readers, such as compassion and empathy for Hamlet's plight despite his poor treatment of her. Ophelia even makes some effort to correct Hamlet's embittered path; when Hamlet remarks that his mother looks 'cheerful' when his 'father died within … two hours' (3.2.121–122), she reminds him that it has in fact been 'twice two months' (3.2.123), perhaps in effort to gently urge him towards overcoming his grief and grudge. Ophelia's death therefore represents the death of such innocence and rationality in a dangerous, decaying world. Her mournful singing in Act 4 Scene 5 further amplifies her tragic victimhood, and, upon viewing her 'distracted', fractured mental state, Claudius remarks that 'this / Like to a murd'ring piece, in many places / Gives me superfluous death' (4.5.122). This suggests that the anguish of the model noblewoman Ophelia evokes in the king a feeling of 'many' deaths, perhaps indicating the extent to which his actions have brought about the 'superfluous death' of not just individuals but entire facets of Denmark and its established norms. To this end, Shakespeare positions the madness and death of Ophelia as a tragic but unavoidable by-product of a corrupt kingdom in which goodness is untenable.

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

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Indeed, as is the case with much of Shakespeare's oeuvre, the tragic trajectories and deaths of *Hamlet's* characters are portrayed as inevitabilities given their circumstances. The murders and suicides from Act 3 onwards are direct consequences of proceeding events, all of which ultimately stem from Claudius's bloody usurpation and regicide. Firstly, the 'rash and bloody deed' (3.4.26) of Hamlet stabbing Polonius through the curtain is an overt result of his paranoia, stoked by the ghost who galvanises his grief and weaponises it as a tool for vengeance. The ghost's influence is especially clear in the immediate aftermath of the murder – Hamlet, upon realising he has killed an innocent man who happens to be Ophelia's father, remarks flippantly that this 'bloody deed' is 'almost as bad, good mother, / As kill a king, and marry with his brother' (3.4.28–29). Here, he exhibits a single-minded fixation on the injustice of his father's death, with barely two iambs spent on acknowledging his own sinful action before lamenting that Polonius was a 'wretched, rash, intruding fool' (3.4.31). This action propels Ophelia's madness and inspires Laertes to 'dare damnation' (4.5.130) and exact his own revenge, while Claudius's pride prevents him from justly punishing Hamlet's misdeeds because the Danish public

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

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'dip … all [Hamlet's] faults in their affection' and 'convert his gyves to graces' (4.7.19–21). Where Hamlet has ruminated over his father's demise for months, Laertes's loss of his father and sister are fresh wounds that motivate him to immediate and reckless action. Hence, the play is bookended with deaths by poison, though the ending is far bloodier than the beginning. Shakespeare's portrayal of corrupted characters culminates in an imbalanced and corrupt world where such misfortunes are inevitable.

6. (cont'd) select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

Hamlet is one of many plays in which subverting the divine right of kings leads to calamity. Shakespeare's emphasis on the inexorable decay and deaths of the characters highlights to the reader how the socio-political landscape of Denmark is altered by the moral corruption that resulted from the sin of regicide, and thus the play's tragic conclusion invites the reader to see the perilous consequences of murder.

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

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***Hamlet* by William Shakespeare**

b) Analyse the influence of the ghost on Hamlet's development in the play.

Hamlet is a play suffused with madness, mortality and ambiguity, all of which are made manifest in the ghost of King Hamlet. Though critics are divided as to whether this ghost is more than an illusion or just a figment of Hamlet's imagination and instability, it is irrefutable that the ghost has a drastic effect on the trajectory of Hamlet's character. Despite its relatively minimal stage presence, the ghost serves an important function in Shakespeare's portrait of Hamlet's psyche, contributing to the play's complexity and intrigue for audiences past and present.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

From the outset of the play, the ghost is shrouded in a mystery that never fully abates. The opening line, in which Bernardo asks 'who's there' (1.1.1), has a double meaning beyond the expository conversation that ensues between him and Francisco as Shakespeare quickly establishes a tense and expectant atmosphere among the men who await the 'dreaded sight' of the 'apparition' (1.1.25–27). Though the ghost briefly appears to these soldiers and Horatio and speaks only to Hamlet, Shakespeare's inclusion of this scene verifies the ghost's existence before it becomes entangled in Hamlet's turbulent mental state. Likewise, the air of confusion and desperation in Act 1 Scene 1 as Horatio attempts to interpret the ghost 'spread[ing] its arms', entreating it to 'stay' and 'speak' (1.1.51), is reinforced by Hamlet questioning 'what may this mean / That thou, dead corpse, again in complete steel / Revisits thus … to shake our disposition' (1.4.51–55). The motif of confusion and uncertainty persists throughout the play, taking a particular toll on Hamlet who is 'bound … to revenge' (1.5.6–7) by the ghost's tale and the imperative command to 'Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder' (1.5.25). This is the first instance of the word 'murder' in the script, but it occurs twenty times from this point on as Shakespeare has the ghost effectively plant this seed in Hamlet's (and the audience's) mind. Hence, Shakespeare portrays the ghost as an enigmatic instigator of chaos both in Hamlet's psyche and more broadly in the world of the play as he is both a victim to and a perpetuating factor in something being 'rotten in the state of Denmark' (1.4.90).

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

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6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

In this sense, both Hamlet and the ghost meet parallel fates. The king dies as a result of literal poison being poured in his ear, and later Hamlet's death and the tragedy of the play come as a result of the metaphorical poison in Hamlet's ear through his encounters with the ghost. These encounters prey on Hamlet's lack of direction by providing him with an imperative goal; the character from Act 1 Scene 2 who desires 'that this too too solid flesh would melt' (1.2.129)

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

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becomes driven to 'catch the conscience of the king' (2.2.600). However, Hamlet is feigning his 'antic disposition' (1.5.172) at this point, evidenced by Shakespeare having him transition from prosaic ramblings in the presence of Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to his typical, measured iambic pentameter in the soliloquy that ends Act 2 Scene 2. This prompts the audience to consider notions of appearance and deception; just as Hamlet is capable of deceiving others, it is possible this ability is also paralleled in his ghostly father. The question of which characters see the ghost and in what form is a central one for any audience, and has varied drastically across different performances of the play. For instance, that the script indicates that Horatio and the guards can see the ghost and that Gertrude cannot is a strange detail. Perhaps Shakespeare is implying that the ghost only wishes to appear to Hamlet as a means of securing revenge against Claudius and has no interest in communicating with his former wife and 'most seeming virtuous queen' (1.5.46), commanding his son to disregard her and 'leave her to heaven' (1.5.86). Contrarily, perhaps the ghost's dialogue and desires are a figment of Hamlet's imagination, validating his suspicions and providing him with a catalyst for vengeance. Ultimately, the ghost's presence is ambiguous, but his destructive effect on Hamlet's psyche is irrefutable.

5. (cont'd) analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

Throughout the play, Shakespeare shows how both Hamlet and the ghost are afflicted by thoughts of their own mortality, albeit from different sides of life and death. The ghost is tormented by the 'sulph'rous and tormenting flames' of purgatory, 'doom'd' and 'confin'd … till [his] foul crimes … are burnt and purg'd away', which galvanises Hamlet out of his Act 1 ennui and sets him down a path of madness (1.5.3–13). The ghost reappears only to 'whet [Hamlet's] almost blunted purpose' (3.2.111) and spur him on. However, the ghost is not seen after this point; there is no resolution to his suffering. By contrast, Hamlet's preoccupation with death becomes more prominent as the play progresses, particularly when he encounters the skull of Yorick and grapples with his death, signalling the loss of his 'gibes', 'gambols', 'songs' and 'flashes of merriment' from the world (5.1.190). The finality of death troubles him despite the ghost serving as apparent evidence of an afterlife. In Hamlet's pursuit of revenge on the ghost's behalf, he wrestles with the famous existential question of 'to be, or not to be' (3.1.56) in which he ponders his own mortality. But he transitions from use of singular first person pronouns to the plural 'we' when asking about what meaning there is after 'we shuffle off this mortal coil' (3.1.67) and what forces make us 'bear those ills we have' instead of face 'others that we know not of' (3.1.81–82). This fear of the unknown is a lasting consequence of the ghost's interference, engendering Hamlet's descent and the play's tragic conclusion.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

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Hamlet, like many of Shakespeare's plays, is equivocal in its arguments about the power of the supernatural as opposed to the free will of its characters. Ultimately, Shakespeare suggests that while the ghost is instrumental in establishing the revenge plot, it is just one of many players in the tragedy as Hamlet's unresolved grief and declining mental state facilitate his own downfall.

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

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***Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë**

a) ‘He had not imagined that a woman would dare to speak so to a man.’

How is the reader invited to view the complexities of gender roles in *Jane Eyre*?

Set in the socially repressive Victorian era, Charlotte Brontë’s controversial Gothic romance *Jane Eyre* explores the pitiful plights of various women amidst a confining patriarchy, but also manages to subtly challenge and subvert various social norms. Brontë’s novel explores both masculinity and femininity, as well as the stereotypical expectations of men and women as family units and the ‘millions in silent revolt against their lot’ (p. 109). Thus, *Jane Eyre* presents the reader with a complex portrait of gender roles and complex characters who grapple with them.

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

Initially, the depiction of female characters in *Jane Eyre* is steeped in its nineteenth-century context, as the women do not strive for anything beyond blissful domesticity. The Reed sisters are particularly palpable examples of this, with Georgiana’s enviable beauty enshrining her as the epitome of desirable womanhood. She garners more attention than either Jane or Eliza, despite Eliza’s bitter lamentation that she is a ‘vain and absurd animal’ who seeks only to ‘fasten her feebleness on some other person’s strength’ (p. 237). However, Jane sees the weaknesses in Eliza’s façade as a ceaselessly ‘bus[y] person’ who could never ‘discover any result of her diligence’, using ‘clockwork regularity’ to restore control over her life in lieu of a willing suitor to control it for her (p. 236). Neither Reed sister attains any success beyond this, and both pale in comparison to the compassion and intellect of Jane; hence, Brontë establishes that rather than positioning oneself on a spectrum of either embracing or rejecting feminine expectations, true success lies outside of this dichotomy. This also serves to make Jane all the more sympathetic for desiring a comparatively radical freedom from her life as a caged bird, as Brontë proffers Jane to the reader as a ‘free human being with an independent will’ (p. 256) and an escape from the confines of gender roles.

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

The detrimental effects of these societal norms are further evident in how Jane is treated by her male counterparts. Most egregiously, John Reed abuses Jane at Gateshead, emboldened by his privileged life, dismissing Jane as someone who ‘ought to beg’ rather than ‘eat the same meals’ as the Reeds ‘and wear clothes at [their] mama’s expense’ (p. 5). Such callous tormenting portrays not only a gendered but also a socioeconomic prejudice designed to subjugate the less powerful. Brontë highlights this intersectionality, showing the extent of its effects on Jane’s self-image – ‘every morsel of flesh on [her] bones shrank when he came near’ (p. 4).

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

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Despite his role in perpetuating these societal norms, John Reed is eventually consumed by the same leeching entitlement he once decried, committing suicide after having 'ruined himself and half-ruined his family' (p. 225) with debts and vices. His character serves as a cautionary tale of how patriarchal privileges harm the oppressed and, eventually, the oppressors. Although Mr Rochester and St John's attitudes towards Jane are not as explicitly vitriolic, they harbour various preconceptions about gender that impede both their and Jane's happiness. For instance, the aristocratic and pious St John is the antithesis of Mr Rochester, but he is also the epitome of religious dedication that renders him 'ice cold' (p. 357); Jane frequently compares him to marble or stone, words that connote a lifelessness and lack of humanity. His desire to have her 'suit [him]' (p. 421) is also problematic from a modern perspective; however, this is somewhat subverted in the penultimate chapter when Jane chooses Mr Rochester and implicitly rewards him for postulating 'Jane suits me: do I suit her?' (p. 454). Through this, Brontë endorses the atypical equality found in Jane and Mr Rochester's union, and celebrates this as a stark contrast to her protagonist's dynamic with men who are more concerned with gender roles.

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

Brontë's comparisons between male and female characters also serve to challenge societal norms regarding gender and hierarchical hegemony, and only characters who actively seek freedom are able to transcend the limitations placed upon them by society. Jane herself is cognizant of these realities; while conversing with St John prior to his proposal, she astutely notes that he 'had not imagined that a woman would dare to speak so to a man' despite the fact that she 'felt at home in this sort of discourse' (pp. 380–381). To this, he retorts 'you *are* original' – the italicisation emphasises just how irrefutably unique Jane's boldness is for her gender. This conviction empowers Jane to make lasting bonds with people who share her worldview and compassion, such as Miss Temple and Bessie, but also allows her to empathise with the plights of others, from Mrs Reed to Helen to Bertha. By contrast, Brontë highlights the superficiality of the relationships that exist within the confines of traditional gender roles; the elitism of Mr Mason and Miss Ingram leads to them betraying Mr Rochester when they lose faith in his fortune and stature. Therefore, by foregrounding the disadvantageous realities of rigid gender roles, Brontë invites the reader to venerate Jane for transgressing and transcending these limitations.

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

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Thus, through Brontë's radical focus on the individual and the empowerment of Jane's character to 'be [her]self' (p. 263) and 'respect [her]self' (p. 320), the novel lauds the notion of gender equality in ways that are still resonant to contemporary readers.

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

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Although Jane's decision to marry Mr Rochester appears on the surface to be a sacrifice of her earned freedoms, her proud declaration to the reader of 'I married him' (p. 458) conveys an agency and purposefulness that underscores Brontë's portrayal of true autonomy as the freedom to make one's own choices and follow one's own desires.

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

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Jane Eyre **by Charlotte Brontë**

b) What perspective about Jane does Brontë communicate through Jane's relationship with Mr Rochester?

Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* reveals to the reader a protagonist depicted as an irrefutably moral character who values her autonomy despite living in a society that works to deny it to her. In particular, her relationship with Mr Rochester challenges many dimensions of her personality and, in doing so, facilitates her transformation into his equal. Hence, Jane's relationship with Mr Rochester is a central component of this bildungsroman; through this relationship, Brontë levels subtle social criticism and endorses female autonomy.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

At Thornfield, Jane is initially made to feel unworthy of Mr Rochester's love, but her fledgling relationship with him becomes a proxy for her own self-image. This is most evident in Jane's portraits of herself and Blanch Ingram; the 'disconnected, poor, and plain' governess is deserving of nothing more valuable than 'chalk … without softening one defect', whereas Blanche – 'an accomplished lady of rank' – warrants 'smooth ivory' and the 'freshest, finest, clearest tints … most delicate pencils' to paint the 'loveliest face you can imagine' (p. 161). The exaggeration of Blanche as the archetypal feminine ideal, coupled with the superlative language in this passage, emphasise Jane's feelings of inadequacy. It is important to note this is all framed by Jane's fixation on what 'Mr Rochester thinks [of] these two pictures' (p. 161) were he to compare them. Thus, Brontë explicates that at this point in the novel, Jane's identity is inextricably tied up in her vision of herself through Mr Rochester's eyes. He is a consistent source of inner conflict for Jane, be that through his action or inaction, but he also comes to inspire an unbridled passion in Jane that is chiefly responsible for her decision to forego her freedoms in favour of love and mutual devotion.

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

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4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

However, the relationship between Jane and Mr Rochester is still somewhat vexed. Jane is only able to attain parity in her relationship with Mr Rochester after she learns that she has inherited a fortune from her uncle and, inversely, Mr Rochester loses much of his status due to his blindness. Through this, Brontë implicitly reveals the discrepancy in social stature between the two: Jane must rise and Mr Rochester must fall for them to be considered equals. This commentary on class can also be seen in Jane's somewhat inexact status – her time at Lowood grants her the education and manners of the aristocracy, but also results in her becoming a governess in Mr Rochester's house and therefore subservient to him, enabling Brontë to highlight the arbitrary nature of social hierarchy. An added layer to the dimension of Jane and

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

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Mr Rochester's relationship comes with the revelation of Bertha, the Gothic monster and manifestation of Mr Rochester's secrecy. However, some critics have interpreted Bertha as a mirror of Jane's passions; Rochester reinforces the imagery of Jane as a bird, 'wild, frantic … rending its own plumage in its desperation' (p. 256), and when Jane hears Bertha 'groan' from the third floor, she likens it to the noise of a 'carrion-seeking bird of prey' (p. 212). This reification of Rochester's wives as desperate or vulturous birds is akin to an animalistic version of a Madonna-whore dichotomy – Jane with her pleasing plumage and Bertha with her carnal groans. Both women seek to escape these limitations, but only Jane has the sanity and fortitude to do so. The death of Bertha could be seen as a representation of the loss of Jane's wildness but also symbolises an escape from confinement and condemnation, albeit a violent one, that parallels Jane's own liberation from a potential marriage more akin to captivity, freeing her to marry Mr Rochester on her own terms.

3. (cont'd) analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

Furthermore, the novel's conclusive 'Reader, I married him' (p. 458) is presented as a celebratory zenith of Jane's power and autonomy after she is tested in myriad ways throughout the text. For instance, the passionless marriage proposal and 'experimental kiss' (p. 405) of St John represent a test of Jane's values as she is forced to contemplate a dutiful devotion to God and a life that promises security but is also predicated on lovelessness. Jane, Brontë reveals, is a woman who 'know[s] no medium … between absolute submission and determined revolt' (p. 407). However, her decision when confronted with this second proposal mirrors that of her first, in which she is 'roused to something like passion' at the thought of being 'an automaton … a machine without feelings' (p. 255). On the one hand, St John is less aggressive in enforcing patriarchal norms than other male figures in the text, particularly in contrast to Mr Brocklehurst who uses a veil of religiosity to degrade Jane and have her become a 'self-denying … child of Grace' (p. 61). But he is less able than Mr Rochester to appreciate Jane's deep-seated desire for simultaneous independence and mutual devotion. Perhaps the complex union of these two ideals is only possible in the complex circumstances of the eventual union between Jane and Mr Rochester – a relationship Brontë uses to reflect how much Jane's self-esteem changes over the course of the novel.

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

Ultimately, Brontë's explores this evolving relationship as an analogue for Jane's growth, and her propensity to help others grow, as she transforms in Mr Rochester's eyes until she is '[her] husband's life as fully as he is [hers]' (p. 460). The reader is invited to rejoice in this portrait of domesticity not because Jane has finally succumbed to her patriarchal duty to wed, but because she obtains a husband and her happiness without compromising her sense of self.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

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***Macbeth* by William Shakespeare**

a) How is the reader invited to view the role of the supernatural forces in *Macbeth*?

The play *Macbeth* and its eponymous protagonist are seemingly ruled by supernatural forces that set tragic events in motion. This is especially pertinent given Shakespeare's Jacobean context – his king and patron James I of England was notoriously superstitious and fearful of the supernatural realm. In order to validate these concerns and explore the complexities of prophecy and causality, Shakespeare incorporated many supernatural and ambiguous elements into his play, most obviously in the form of the witches, but also in the form of ghosts, apparitions and symbols. To this end, Shakespeare encourages his audience to see the destructive power of the supernatural.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

The most palpable purpose of supernatural forces in *Macbeth* is the role that the witches play in instigating Macbeth's meteoric rise to the throne and subsequent tragic demise. Their introduction to Macbeth in Act 1 Scene 3 establishes their prophecy of his path from 'Glamis' to 'Cawdor' to 'King hereafter' (1.3.49–51). Despite Banquo's wise warning that these 'instruments of darkness' may have offered them 'honest trifles' in order to 'betray [them] / In deepest consequence' (1.3.125–127), Macbeth is irrevocably seduced by these promises, noting in an aside that the apparent 'suggestion' that he should kill Duncan supposedly makes his 'seated heart knock at [his] ribs' (1.3.135–137). However, the witches make no such suggestion; rather, Shakespeare has them sustain a deliberate ambiguity in their seemingly contradictory predictions about how Banquo will be 'lesser than Macbeth, and greater' (1.3.66) or, later, that Macbeth should fear Macduff but that he need not fear any man born of a woman. Hence, the audience is made to see both the equivocal nature of the witches' prophecies and Macbeth's fatal mistake of wholeheartedly believing them. That these self-fulfilling prophecies then lead to the death of a king was a highly provocative concept for Shakespeare's contemporary audience, as he implies that supernatural forces are either invested in subverting or otherwise indifferent to the divine right of kings; neither Macbeth nor Banquo's sons would be in the line of succession without them committing the high crimes of treason and regicide. The witches, as the source of this 'hurlyburly' (1.1.3), are therefore presented to the audience as a menacing and anarchic threat to societal order and the monarchy as a whole.

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

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This depiction is furthered by Shakespeare's exploration of the supernatural as contravening the natural world. The witches embrace this misrule, chanting 'fair is foul, and foul is fair' (1.1.12) as a celebration of deception and equivocation. As a result of the witches' chaos, Scotland is thrown into disarray with the pathetic fallacy of storms and inclement weather symbolising the impending political tumult and emotional turmoil. Furthermore, the characters who give credence to the prophecies (namely Macbeth and Lady Macbeth) experience swift psychological declines as their amorality is punished. Macbeth, prior to killing Duncan, personifies 'Murder' as 'stealth[ily] pac[ing]' towards his victim, moving 'like a ghost' (2.1.53–57), and is haunted by visions of a dagger and of Banquo until his mind is ravaged – the once valiant warrior who claims he cannot be 'taint[ed] by fear' (5.3.3) is rendered 'aweary of the sun' and merely waiting for death in the form of the 'world [coming] undone' (5.5.49–50). Likewise, despite never meeting the witches, Lady Macbeth is tormented by her visceral hallucinations and the 'smell of … blood' (5.1.45). By Act 5, the once savvy political player is left a hollow wreck, muttering about how 'Hell is murky' (5.1.40), implying that her acceptance of supernatural prophecies has poisoned her mind. She is no longer able to speak in verse, with the breakdown of iambic pentameter indicative of the disorder in her mind and, most tragically, 'what's done cannot be undone' (5.1.60–61). Though these final words could be interpreted as Lady Macbeth's regret for her role in the deaths of Duncan and Lady Macduff, Shakespeare may also have chosen these words as a poignant warning to his audience: to embrace the unnatural or supernatural is an irredeemable decision with irreparable consequences.

The play uses the ambiguity of the supernatural to compound the reader's fear of these unknown forces. The witches are physically contradictory, 'not like th' inhabitants o' the earth'; they 'should be women, / And yet [their] beards forbid' (1.3.42) Banquo from identifying them as such. The stage directions specify that they 'vanish' in Act 1 Scene 3 and Act 4 Scene 1 after proffering their prophecies; their disappearing apparitions in the latter scene also amplify the sense that they are ephemeral and unpredictable forces. In contrast, Hecate has a more overt belief in order, commanding the witches as the 'mistress of [their] charms' and 'contriver of all harms' (3.5.6–7). She chides them for 'traffic[king] with Macbeth, / In riddles, and affairs of death' (3.5.4–5) and implies that where the witches were indiscriminately sowing seeds of chaos, she instead believes in the karmic justice of the 'spiteful and wayward' (3.5.12) Macbeth meeting a 'dismal and a fatal end' (3.5.21).

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

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This hinting of the machinations and, at times, conflicting intentions of supernatural figures bolsters Shakespeare's depiction of them as fearsome. Likewise, Banquo's ghost and the witches' apparitions have dubious motives; in Act 3 Scene 4, the ghost 'enters' and 're-enters' but does not outwardly haunt Macbeth and, as such, Macbeth's anguish upon seeing the 'horrible shadow' (3.4.105) is largely the result of his own guilt as opposed to a product of the ghost's desire to harm him. Later, in Act 4 Scene 1, the three apparitions take the form of menacing symbols: 'an armoured head', 'a bloodstained child' and a 'child wearing a crown, with a small green tree in his hand'. Though the accompanying prophecies have obvious meanings that come to fruition, the apparitions are ambiguous – is the 'armoured head' representative of the threat of Macduff, or the soon to be beheaded Macbeth? Is the 'bloodstained child' the infant Macduff 'untimely ripped' from his mother's womb (5.8.16), or a reminder of the innocence of Macbeth's victims, or even a manifestation of his own childlessness? This scene is accompanied by 'eerie music' and a mysteriously sinking cauldron, all of which culminate in unsettling Macbeth to the point that he resolves that 'the very firstling of [his] heart shall be / The firstling of [his] hand' (4.1.147–148), with no time for caution or contemplation of consequence. Ultimately, this cements the tragedy as inevitable, as the murky morality of the supernatural 'prick[s] the sides' (1.7.26) of Macbeth and sets in motion an inexorably tragic outcome.

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

To this end, Shakespeare capitalises on his audience's apprehension towards the supernatural as well as his patron King James I's overt distrust and dislike of supernatural threats to the throne. Thus, Shakespeare denounces the role of the supernatural not as the root of all evil necessarily but as an undoubtedly destructive, anarchic and dangerous presence in the body politic.

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

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***Macbeth* by William Shakespeare**

b) Analyse the influence of Lady Macbeth on her husband's downfall.

Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth* is dominated by two powerful and psychologically complex characters: the titular tragic hero Macbeth and his wife Lady Macbeth. Though it would be reductive to say Lady Macbeth's encouragement of her husband is the sole reason for his descent into murderous madness, she undeniably plays a pivotal role in eliciting his ambition and provoking him to commit regicide as a means of asserting his masculinity. However, Shakespeare does not characterise Lady Macbeth as an entirely unsympathetic villain; she is depicted as having her own complex desires and motivations. In fact, despite their affection for one another, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth compound each other's suffering through the unintended consequences of their actions; hence, Shakespeare implies that Lady Macbeth is both a victim of and an active agent in the tragedy of the play.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

The audience's introduction to Lady Macbeth sets the stage for Shakespeare's exploration of an unconventional and intriguing female character. Act 1 Scene 5 opens with Lady Macbeth receiving letters and messengers at the castle, issuing imperatives – 'give him tending' (1.5.36) – and even instructing her husband to 'leave all the rest to [her]' (1.5.72), clearly indicating her capacity for political manoeuvres and interpersonal authority. By contrast, the audience's first impressions of Macbeth come from the Captain's report to Duncan about Macdonwald's defeat in which he hails 'brave Macbeth (for well he deserves that name)' (1.2.16) and repeatedly associates him with notions of 'valour' (1.2.19) and the illustrious symbolism of 'eagles' and 'lion[s]' (1.2.35). That Lady Macbeth appears able to command her husband positions her as an atypically powerful figure in this patriarchal society. Yet this control is at odds with her womanhood, as she calls on spirits to 'unsex' her, 'fill[ing her] from the crown to the toe, top-full / Of direst cruelty' (1.5.40–42), thereby freeing her from what she perceives as the limitations of femininity. Although the male characters use similarly visceral language in conveying their violent intent, this soliloquy would have been more shocking to Shakespeare's audience – and this is still true of modern audiences to some extent – as it is antithetical to the stereotypical expectations of women as nurturing creatures. But Lady Macbeth expresses her antipathy for womanhood, wishing she could exchange her 'milk for gall' (1.5.47) as the symbolic 'milk of human kindness' (1.5.16) she dislikes in her husband becomes a physical part of her body from which she wants to achieve distance. Likewise, her imploring her husband to 'be so much more the man' (1.7.51) has echoes of

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

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6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

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her own extolling of masculine potential: perhaps she is moulding Macbeth into the man she wishes she could be. Thus, Shakespeare reveals how Lady Macbeth's impossible desires to transform herself are redirected through her influence over her husband.

This is complicated, however, by Shakespeare's hints towards Lady Macbeth's underlying fragility and insecurities. She initially plans to commit the murder of Duncan herself, as Macbeth wants to 'proceed no further in this business' (1.7.31), but is unable to carry out the crime because the king 'resembled / [her] father as he slept' (2.2.12–13). Not only does this indicate that Lady Macbeth does not possess the 'undaunted mettle' (1.7.73) she taunts her husband for lacking, it also contradicts her claim that she would have 'dashed the brains out' of her own suckling infant 'had [she] so sworn' to her husband to do so (1.7.58). Likewise, her insistence that 'a little water clears us of this deed' (2.2.64) is undermined by her own palpable guilt for her role in Duncan's murder. Though she has the presence of mind to fake 'fainting' in Act 2 Scene 3 to divert attention away from Macbeth's suspicious behaviour, and maintains to her husband that 'what's done is done' (3.2.12), she is perturbed by Macbeth's contrasting chant that 'blood will have blood' (3.4.122) and is ultimately unable to control Macbeth at the banquet in Act 3 Scene 4. This scene also marks the final on-stage conversation between the couple, with Macbeth's ironic acknowledgement that they are both 'young in deed' (3.4.144) underscoring how neither of them are prepared for the psychological toll of orchestrating murders. Lady Macbeth is not seen again until Act 5 Scene 1, by which point she is afflicted by a 'great perturbation in nature' (5.1.8), sleepwalking with her 'eyes open … but their sense … shut' (5.1.22–23). Here, the conventions of iambic pentameter break down as Lady Macbeth commands 'out, damned spot' (5.1.31) in prose, indicating the disintegration of her mental state. By separating the couple in the second half of the play, Shakespeare complicates Lady Macbeth's culpability; the audience is made to question whether she is more a victim of her own ill-planned sins or her husband's commitment to bloodshed.

Lady Macbeth's final and greatest impact on Macbeth's psyche comes when he is informed of her presumed suicide. Her final words – 'What's done / cannot be undone' (5.1.60–61) – subvert her aforementioned conviction from Act 3, but she is depicted as being too fractured to redeem herself. Macbeth's final soliloquy serves as both a eulogy for Lady Macbeth and a belated anagnorisis for himself; he descends into pessimism upon realising that life 'signif[ies] nothing' (5.5.28). He has now become a man 'aweary of the sun' (5.5.49), awaiting death but unwilling to 'play the Roman fool and die / On [his] own sword' (5.8.1–2).

6. (cont'd) select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

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Hence, though Macbeth's decision to 'try the last' (5.8.32) in battle with Macduff may be his own subconscious desire to fulfil the witches' prophecy, this could also be seen as the final, fatal product of Lady Macbeth's repeated exhortation that he be a 'man' with no 'passage to remorse' (1.5.43). In portraying the unravelling of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Shakespeare ultimately suggests that such unfettered and ruthless masculinity is untenable.

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

Thus, Lady Macbeth's role as the 'illness' that 'attends' (1.5.18) her husband's ambition is duly punished by an 'infected mind', for, as the doctor astutely notes, 'unnatural deeds / Do breed unnatural troubles' (5.1.64–65). *Macbeth* presents the audience with an anachronistically powerful woman, but also highlights the disastrous consequences of this power for both Lady Macbeth and every other character affected by her actions.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

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***Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell**

a) 'He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother.'

How is the reader invited to view the notion of loyalty in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*?

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell explicates the difficulties of retaining freedom and personal loyalties within the confines of an oppressive society. The Party makes explicit its intentions for there to be 'no loyalty, except loyalty towards the Party' (p. 280). It employs horrific methods of physical and psychological torture to supplant or corrupt any existing interpersonal or ideological loyalties and instil an unwavering devotion to Big Brother, as seen in the 'victory' (p. 311) over Winston and the implied victory over every citizen of Oceania.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

The most obvious example of the Party's manipulation of loyalties can be seen in the destruction of Winston and Julia's relationship. Her pithy but powerful 'I love you' (p. 113) note inspires in Winston a bold disregard for his own safety – she 'adore[s]' being 'corrupt to the bone' in carrying out their romantic affair, a 'political act' that Orwell portrays as the antithesis of the Party doctrine (p. 114). However, Orwell contrasts their courage with the sentiment shown by characters who are aware of what the Party is capable of. The threat of Room 101 – the epitome of the Party's weaponisation of fear – is so profound that J Bumstead, one of Winston's fellow prisoners, pleads with guards to spare him from Room 101 and instead take his 'wife and three children' who are under the age of six and 'cut their throats in front of [his] eyes', indicating how the Party destroys the fabric of familial loyalty and parental protective instincts (p. 249). Winston is also told that Julia 'betrayed' him 'immediately' and 'unreservedly' (p. 271), and while O'Brien is, to put it mildly, not the most reliable character, this does imply that even the seemingly indomitable rebellious spirit of Julia is easily 'burned out of her' (p. 271), which can then be used against Winston to erode his loyalty by eliminating its reciprocity. Hence, the text showcases how loyalty towards anything other than the Party is made to seem futile and self-destructive, reinforcing the Party's absolute authority.

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

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However, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also examines loyalty on an ideological level through its depiction of the two amorphous characters: Big Brother and Emmanuel Goldstein, neither of whom are ever seen in person, but whose faces haunt the citizens like spectres. Goldstein is characterised as 'the primal traitor, the earliest defiler of the Party's purity' (p. 14) and the source of all rebellion. At the Two Minutes Hate, the Goldstein propaganda transforms his voice into a 'sheep's bleat' (p. 17) and his face into a sheep,

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

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then a Eurasian soldier, before ‘the hostile figure melted into the face of Big Brother’ and the crowd breathes a ‘deep sigh of relief’ (p. 18). This symbolises how the sight of this oppressive authority has come to represent a familiar comfort. Winston also contemplates how easy it is for records to be altered to ‘create dead men’ (p. 50) like Comrade Ogilvy who is brought ‘into existence’ by ‘a few of lines of print and a couple of faked photographs’ (p. 49), perhaps subtly hinting at the non-existence of both Big Brother and his ‘traitor’ (p. 14) – two polarities that are more paradigmatic than persons. At two pivotal moments in the novel, Winston and O’Brien discuss the truth behind these figures. In O’Brien’s home, Winston is told that Goldstein ‘is such a person, and he is alive’ (p. 179), though it is unclear whether this is a lie Winston either deliberately perpetuates or is himself convinced of. Later, in the Ministry of Love, Winston asks O’Brien whether Big Brother exists and receives a ‘logical absurdity’ in reply; ‘You do not exist’, O’Brien tells him, and a ‘sense of helplessness assail[s] him’ as Winston grapples with the notion that he must have more loyalty to the ‘embodiment of the Party’ than belief in his own existence (p. 272). Thus, through the dichotomy of Big Brother and Goldstein as symbols of loyalty and disloyalty, Orwell reveals how both forces can exacerbate the suffering of citizens.

5. (cont’d) analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

Arguably, the ultimate demonstration of the Party’s power comes in the form of its ability to supersede characters’ fundamental desires for self-preservation – in other words, the characters’ loyalty to themselves is displaced by their ‘love’ (p. 311) for Big Brother. Winston’s torture is designed, he knows, ‘to humiliate him and destroy his power of arguing and reasoning’ with the ‘real weapon [being] the merciless questioning … laying traps for him … convicting him at every step of lies and self-contradiction’ (p. 254). Furthermore, O’Brien instils in Winston the idea that ‘two and two … are five’ (p. 263) by making it impossible for Winston to trust his past memories of demonstrable evidence or his present view of ‘how many fingers’ (p. 264) O’Brien holds up. This culminates in irrefutable proof of the Party’s desire not to ‘destroy [its] enemies’ but to ‘change them’ (p. 265) – ‘to explain and persuade rather than to punish’ (p. 257). O’Brien himself becomes ‘stern and animated’ (p. 265) in refuting the notion that the Ministry of Love is a place of punishment. The repeated exclamatory ‘No!’ punctuates his insistence that the Thought Police’s true intent is to ‘cure’ people like Winston and ‘make [them] sane’ (p. 265) by having them ‘surrender … of [their] own free will’ (p. 267). The pinnacle of loyalty to the Party, therefore, is not that Winston and Julia ‘sold’ (p. 307) one another, but that they sold themselves such that Big Brother’s victory became their own.

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

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Hence, Orwell's novel challenges the reader's understanding of loyalty as a pure or inalienable feeling, highlighting how it can be interfered with, desecrated and toppled by an enforced loyalty and love toward an all-consuming authoritarian regime. Orwell invites the reader to acknowledge that nothing and no one can be incorruptible, encouraging us to resist totalitarianism and retain our humanity before we can no longer do either.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

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***Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell**

b) Analyse the influence of O'Brien on Winston's psychological state throughout the novel.

George Orwell's seminal dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a startling distillation of what totalitarianism does to a society and its people. The nuances of the Party's desire to control its citizens are epitomised by the mysterious O'Brien, who functions as both an oppressive enforcer and indoctrinated victim of the Party. The revelation of his betrayal of Winston to the Thought Police is a crucial turning point in the novel. However, Orwell also uses the initial development of the bond between O'Brien and Winston, as well as the aftermath of O'Brien's betrayal, to explore the ambiguities of O'Brien's character and the effects these have on Winston's perception of society and Big Brother.

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

Winston's world is initially one of 'vile wind' and 'gritty dust' (p. 3) in which the 'charm' (p. 12) of O'Brien's persona is an oasis of intrigue. O'Brien is characterised through Winston's perspective as a 'curiously disarming' and 'curiously civilised' man, and despite his 'formidable appearance' (p. 12), Winston feels 'drawn to him … because of a secretly-held belief – or perhaps not even a belief, merely a hope – that O'Brien's political orthodoxy was not perfect' (p. 13). This parenthetical thought betrays Winston's yearning for rebellion, but also, arguably more strongly, for any authentic human connection, having been deprived of emotional closeness by a Party single-mindedly trying to control its citizens' lives. When their eyes meet, Winston interprets an 'unmistakeable message' of 'I am with you' (p. 19) that passes between them. He habitually 'think[s] of O'Brien' (p. 27), as his impression of the man becomes inextricably linked with anti-Party sentiment and the promise that they will one day 'meet in the place where there is no darkness' (p. 19). Winston affixes his hopes to this assurance, but Orwell ultimately uses this to foreshadow the horrors of the Ministry of Love and Room 101, eternally illuminated by artificial light. In the absence of any concrete connection, Winston imagines 'that he [is] speaking to O'Brien' when he writes the truism 'Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four' (p. 84). But this too is cruelly recontextualised by the knowledge that O'Brien will later physically torture Winston with electrocution until he concedes that 'sometimes … two and two … are five' (p. 263), and further mentally torture him in Room 101 until he is 'blind, helpless, mindless' (p. 299). The asyndeton underscores just how much of Winston's connectivity has been lost, and thus Orwell foreshadows O'Brien's betrayal and its disastrous consequences for Winston's sanity.

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

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This betrayal is made more distressing by the semblance of a relationship that develops between the two men – the loss of this closeness and hope scars Winston irrevocably. That is not to say that Winston is foolishly naive in his optimism; he briefly acknowledges that he has 'nothing but a flash of the eye and a single equivocal remark' (p. 176) as evidence of O'Brien's sentiment. However, the reader can interpret this equivocation as a kind of entrapment, as O'Brien prompts Winston with lines like 'shall I say it, or will you?' until Winston discloses that he and Julia are self-professed 'enemies of the Party' (p. 177). That O'Brien thinks it necessary to first solidify Winston's hope in the Brotherhood and Emmanuel Goldstein before systematically dismantling it establishes him as an insidious kind of villain – he, like the Party, does not want to break and dispose of 'heretic[s]' but have them 'accept' the Party's dogma (p. 281); there can be no 'martyrdoms' (p. 265) because a person who dies resisting the Thought Police undermines their absolute authority. However, our view of Winston is complicated when he first sees O'Brien in the Ministry of Love and O'Brien remarks with an 'almost regretful irony' that the Thought Police 'got [him] a long time ago' (p. 250). Through this, Orwell could be implying that O'Brien was once a genuine rebel against the Party, but was compelled into 'utter submission' and 'merge[d] himself in the Party, so that he *is* the Party', becoming 'all-powerful and immortal' (p. 277). In this sense, O'Brien being deployed by the Party to psychologically break Winston forms part of Orwell's critique of the cyclical reinforcing of power.

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

Despite the extreme shift from supposed confidante to chief torturer, Winston's impression of O'Brien remains noticeably stable. Early in the novel, he considers O'Brien as having 'the appearance of … a person that you could talk to' (p. 13); this is repeated following his electrocution when he 'look[s] up gratefully at O'Brien' for ending the pain, because 'it did not matter whether O'Brien was a friend or an enemy … O'Brien was a person who could be talked to' (p. 264). This repetition is a harrowing indictment of the Party's capability and foreshadows Winston's eventual 'love' (p. 311) for Big Brother as his fractured mental state clings to any form of connection. The 'metaphysic[al]' (p. 279) nature of their conversations in the Ministry of Love validate Winston's suspicions that he and O'Brien are similarly matched in intellect; O'Brien even anticipates 'solipsism' as 'the word [Winston] is trying to think of' (p. 279), and grasps the true meaning of Winston's realisation that he has not yet 'betrayed Julia' (p. 286). Similarly, after his arrest, Winston still 'thought … of O'Brien, with a flickering of hope' (p. 240), until, as a result of physical and psychological torture, O'Brien's 'suggestion[s]' eventually 'fill … a patch of emptiness and become absolute truth' (p. 271).

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

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Thus, the influence of O'Brien is corrupted by the Party to obliterate Winston's spirit. This is viscerally evident when Winston feebly professes an enduring belief in the 'spirit of Man' as a principle capable of defeating the Party, and O'Brien utterly degrades his 'emaciated' body, covered in 'filthy grime' and 'rotting away' so badly that he pulls out one of Winston's front teeth, removing both a physical and psychological part of him that will never grow back (p. 285). To this end, Orwell's characterisation of O'Brien as an extension of the Party's pervasive and merciless cruelty warns the reader about the depravity of totalitarianism.

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

Hence, O'Brien's influence on Winston can be perceived as a microcosm for the Party's effect on its people, as their hopes are warped into self-imposed subjugation. Ultimately, therefore, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a distressing but eternally relevant caution to its reader about the psychological toll of oppressive societies.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

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The White Earth by Andrew McGahan

a) How is the reader invited to view the ideas of reconciliation and healing in *The White Earth*?

Andrew McGahan's Australian Gothic novel *The White Earth* is an exploration of intergenerational trauma and resentment in which characters are unwilling or unable to move on from the past. The text showcases myriad wrongdoings, both petty and profound, as a means of exposing the extent to which characters are able to forgive themselves and others. Through internal, familial and cultural conflicts, McGahan invites the reader to observe the damaging and often fatal consequences of refusing to reconcile or heal.

Throughout the novel, McGahan traces the origins of hostilities and tensions to highlight why characters are unable to reconcile their internal and external conflicts. The gradual delineation of the tragedies in John McIvor's life initially contribute to the reader's sense of his trauma; 'Elizabeth White had wielded an axe upon his life' (p. 71) and he 'loathed his own helplessness and poverty' (p. 74). However, that William's mere mention of the Whites is enough to elicit a 'frown' (p. 79) from John decades after the perceived injustice suggests that past slights have solidified into irreconcilable grievances that manifest in the form of John's obsession with the ownership of Kuran Station. This notion is foreign to William as 'it had never occurred to him to be proud of his little farm back home' (p. 82); this innocent, child-like perspective renders John's desires ironically childish by contrast. However, the narrative is woven with a more ancient tale of reconciliation regarding Indigenous Australians and their maltreatment by Daniel McIvor. Ruth's discovery that her grandfather was a member of the Queensland Native Police, a late-nineteenth-century group whose unchecked racist killings are made all the more harrowing by their 'old reports [that] speak only in euphemisms' of 'dispersing' tribes through genocide (p. 335). Likewise, William's horrifying revelation about the white 'dead branches' (p. 358) in the creek serves as a 'shadow of a malevolent history' (p. 361). As Ruth highlights, 'those men and boys [kept] coming back' because Kuran Station was a 'sacred site' – hence, their surviving relatives have been prevented by the McIvors from reconciling the deaths of their ancestors (p. 352). Through this, McGahan juxtaposes the trivial grievances of John with the deep scarring of Indigenous Australians throughout history, revealing how a refusal to be conciliatory impedes the healing of others.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

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Moreover, the novel foregrounds the cyclical nature of trauma and inheritance of grief as a further obstacle in reconciliation. This is most evident in the character of Ruth, who never forgives her father John for 'punish[ing her] with exile' (p. 224) after she was assaulted by Dudley and for not sending Dudley away because he felt guilt over Dudley's 'ravaged' (p. 221) mental state. This two-pronged betrayal – the failure to 'save her that night' and the decision to 'sen[d] her away… although she had done nothing wrong' (p. 224) – alters the course of Ruth's life such that she can never reconcile with her father, and is distilled in the laconic, stand-alone line: 'She began to hate him then' (p. 224). This grows into something self-perpetuating, as seen in John's hyperbolic fault-finding in Ruth's partner Carl as 'the very worst example of everything he hated about the younger generation' (p. 267) and Ruth's 'vindication' (p. 270) in provoking her father's rage. John is gradually revealed to the reader as a fatally flawed man, and arguably the text's antagonist, whose 'immeasurable misery' is 'etched' on his face, 'hollow and wretched and beyond hope' (p. 364). The reader is made to see that he is 'deeply and forever wrong' (p. 224) in ways that Ruth can never forgive – her 'hatred was unqualified and permanent, and … nothing could be saved after all' (p. 270). However, this plaintive realisation of John's is undercut by his stubbornness; even on his deathbed he regards Ruth as a 'poisonous child' (p. 338). William can see no 'real resemblance between them', despite John once calling Ruth 'very much her father's daughter, dark and handsome' (p. 195). This latter reflection, McGahan suggests, is closer to the truth, for although the ideologies of John and Ruth are diametrically opposed, they have a shared inability to heal from the darkness of their pasts.

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

Ultimately though, William is the greatest and most sympathetic victim in the novel's cacophony of conflicts. McGahan employs an interpolated narrative structure to examine the long-lasting effects of estrangement and alienation. This is especially evident in the maltreatment of William and Ruth at the hands of John and other parental figures. The loss of William's father sets in motion a series of tragic events in which William is a pawn to the respective unresolved issues of Veronica and John, represented by the motif of the 'ringing in his ear [that] wouldn't go away' (p. 4). Though he is initially aware that Veronica is 'harder to love' than his father and 'fractured and brittle' (p. 7), he comes to realise just how 'falsely bright' and 'wretched with unhappiness' (p. 323) his mother is. This crystallises into a poignant acknowledgement that she is 'incapable of helping him' as his 'last remnant of faith' in her 'die[s]' when she 'bit[es] her lip' when weighing William's medical care

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

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against her own self-interest (p. 325). That the audience is later told in the epilogue that William has been suffering from 'cholesteatoma' (p. 373), proof of the severity of his neglect, makes this all the more horrific. It is only after his mother's death that William is given a chance to physically heal and, by implication, emotionally heal from his warped parental influence. And although Ruth championing the cause of Indigenous reconciliation is admirable, she actually detects the 'smell' (p. 286) of William's necrotic ear and casually remarks that it 'can't be any fun' to be 'caught between two old people' in this manipulative family feud (p. 287). But she too is more concerned with achieving her own ends by undermining her father's ownership of Kuran Station than the wellbeing of the criminally neglected nine-year-old child. This perpetual fixation on ownership follows Veronica and John to their graves, and nearly sees William to his, but it is only by rejecting this inherited obsession, McGahan implies, that William is able to live outside of their 'darkened … shadow[s]' (p. 361).

5. (cont'd) analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

Ultimately, McGahan suggests that reconciliation is impossible when people fixate on the past to the detriment of their present and future. His novel is thus a testament to the indelible damage done by people who are unwilling to heal and address their trauma, but is also a quiet celebration of the potential to break this cycle and rebuild a life among the wreckage wrought by others.

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

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The White Earth by Andrew McGahan

b) Analyse the influence of John McIvor's beliefs on William's development.

Set against a backdrop of rural Australiana and familial grief, *The White Earth* is a complex portrait of the surrogate father–son relationship of William and his great uncle John. William is a boy reeling from the recent and sudden loss of his father, and John is an old man estranged from his only child. This is initially a promising, symbiotic relationship as the two come to terms with the losses of their pasts, but eventually the reader comes to see John as a selfish and corrosive influence on the young boy, seeking to bestow upon William the same preoccupations with ownership and independence that have defined his own life.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

There are many noteworthy parallels in John and William's lives, though the way they process these events differ greatly. John capitalises on these parallels as a means of bonding with his protégé, informing him that he too 'saw the smoke' (p. 58) the day William's father died. As the two grow closer, John comes to regard him as 'blood … We must be. We share the same ghosts' (p. 239). Though the two have undoubtedly experienced life-altering tragedies, William does not respond with the same palpable, festering rage and entitlement that plagues John after the Whites 'wielded an axe upon his life' by 'banish[ing]' him from Kuran Station (p. 71). That is not to say William is entirely healthy and well-adjusted; his worsening earache becomes a motif of his emotional neglect, and his distant cousin Ruth is the only one who eventually prioritises his health above longstanding family grievances. Nevertheless, when William witnesses his father's violent death from afar and is subsequently slapped by his mother for not 'do[ing] something' (p. 4) despite being just eight-and-a-half years old, he exhibits no indignation and, tragically, he 'said nothing, for there was no one to tell' (p. 1). He accepts the physical abuse of his distraught mother, 'forg[iving] her for it even as it happened' as he considers this 'just the way she was' (p. 4). He even tolerates his insidious earache as 'something that every child had to put up with, and he didn't want to sound weak' (p. 174). By contrast, the reader observes John's obstinacy in 'show[ing] everyone how badly the world has treated him' (p. 261), which is epitomised in his dogged refusal to repair Kuran House despite his adequate finances and offers of assistance from other parties. Hence, McGahan uses William as an intergenerational foil for John to highlight the damaging nature of John's worldview.

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

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The disparity between William and John's beliefs is also amplified in the novel's political undertones and William's discomfort with John's 'patriotic' Australian Independence League. This is introduced to the reader as a 'league of concerned citizens' (p. 131), though the dramatic irony of a pledge that ends with a declaration of belief in 'One Nation' (p. 133) compels the reader to detect the underlying foreshadowing. Though John eventually distances himself from the league's more overt racism, this association forces William to confront the consequences of his great uncle's beliefs. Early in the novel, John's glorification of 'independence' (p. 127) and 'mak[ing] your own decisions' elicits 'dutiful' (p. 137) nods from William, whose nascent worldview is still highly malleable. This is yet another element of William's personality that John exploits, cruelly asking him 'wasn't there anything you learnt from your father?' and forcing the nine-year-old to realise 'there hadn't been enough time, before he was gone' (p. 106). This lays a foundation for William to note that his father 'had never sat William on his knee, pointed out across the wheat fields, and promised, *One day, son, all this will be yours*. Like John McIvor just had' (p. 111). The sentence fragment 'like John McIvor just had' draws attention to William's naivety, but his exposure to the politics of the Native Title debates gradually strips him of this rose-tinted view of his great uncle. Despite being conditioned by John to respect the core tenets of the Australian Independence League, when John explicitly asks William if he thinks the politicians are right, William responds with 'I don't know … no. But …' (p. 176) even before he meets Ruth and is introduced to her contrasting beliefs and support for Native Title. Though the ellipses in William's speech may seem feeble or passive, it is important to note that William has effectively been groomed by John to not only inherit his land but also his political beliefs. The fact is that even in the thrall of his great uncle's appeal and promises, William is still depicted as being able to articulate his apprehension, which speaks volumes to the fundamental differences between the two characters.

> 8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

> 4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

> 5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

> 3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

> 6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

Ultimately, William's departure from the path that John lays for him is the most optimistic element of McGahan's novel. Ruth is instrumental in dismantling various misconceptions that John has built up in William's mind; for instance, it is she who tells him the truth about Allan Cunningham who 'found' Kuran Station by stealing it from those who had been there 'year after year' (pp. 276–277). Hence, when John later 'claim[s] Native Title' because 'there's only [him] left. [He's] been here all along', William feels a telling 'chill' alongside the reader, as even he knows 'something crucial was being warped here, bent into a shape it wasn't meant to be' (p. 294). As more details about the massacre of Indigenous Australians come to light, and as William's walk has the unintended consequence of exposing his great uncle's

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'treacher[y]' (p. 324), John's grasp on both Kuran Station and William become more tenuous, and William is eventually able to see through the manipulation. Even though 'everything William had ever believed about Kuran Station was based on what his uncle had told him', he nevertheless questions, 'What did the old man really know about the property at all?' (p. 326). The novel ends with Ruth rejecting all notions of land being 'fought for' as 'something her father might have said', and her 'return[ing]' to William's hospital bedside, united in their shared repudiation, is McGahan's most poignant condemnation of John's beliefs (pp. 356–376).

4. (cont'd) analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

In the end, John dies 'intestate' (p. 374), and despite his best efforts his beliefs die with him, which McGahan presents as a somewhat tragic but ultimately necessary conclusion to enable Ruth and William to carry on. Thus, *The White Earth* underscores the seductive power of selfish beliefs but, more importantly, validates those who have the strength to fight against them.

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

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***We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* by Karen Joy Fowler**

a) 'Three children, one story. The only reason I'm the one telling it is that I'm the one not currently in a cage.' (Rosemary)

How is the reader invited to view the concept of humanity in *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*?

Karen Joy Fowler's novel *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* invites the reader to challenge their preconceptions about animals, humans and humanity through its characterisation of the Cooke family. In particular, Fowler's depiction of powerful familial bonds both within and between species and the lasting effects these have on the lives of Fern and Rosemary serves to highlight similarities and differences between the monkey and the 'monkey girl' (p. 128). Furthermore, the contrasting attitudes of Rosemary's father and brother compel the reader to question the ethics of animal testing for the sake of scientific understanding – a tension that divides the family in more ways than one, and Rosemary's evocative perspective as the only Cooke child 'not currently in a cage' (p. 304) allows Fowler to explore the depth and breadth of the human experience.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

Throughout the novel, Fowler emphasises the powerful bond between Rosemary and Fern, underscoring to the reader the similarities between them. Not only are they raised together, often 'so close' that Fern's 'breath is in [Rosemary's] mouth', but they also exhibit similar values and belief systems (p. 81). For instance, Rosemary's embittered declaration that 'unfairness bothers children greatly' (p. 59) is directly paralleled by her later remark that 'unfairness bothers chimps greatly' (p. 80). That the two are raised together in the 'Fern/Rosemary Rosemary/Fern study' (p. 99) further amplifies their similarities. There are many instances in which the two receive equal treatment, such as when Rosemary notes that her favourite grad student Matt uses the epithet 'luv' for 'me and Fern both' (p. 98) or when she is given instructions by her mother to refrain from 'biting anyone' or 'jumping on tables' on her first day of kindergarten (p. 102). Fern is also characterised as fundamentally human on a micro level, engaging in such behaviours as 'plugging and unplugging the Christmas lights no matter how many times she was told to cut it out' (p. 86). However, Rosemary's father is more reticent to relate to Fern in this sense, preferring a more scientific detachment from his subjects, which causes friction in their family unit. Rosemary's mother views Fern's desire to wear clothes as evidence of her 'self-expression, an anthropomorphism Dad dislikes' (p. 96). Even Rosemary acknowledges that in hindsight her father was 'far less likely to anthropomorphize Fern than to animalize me' (p. 92).

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

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As a result of this dual experiment to see if 'Fern [can] learn to speak to humans' and if 'Rosemary [can] learn to speak to chimpanzees', both Fern and Rosemary experience unique challenges in their critical learning periods, and, as such, Fowler suggests that both humans and animals can have their lives moulded by the treatment they receive from others (p. 100).

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

As a consequence of her unconventional upbringing, young Rosemary feels as though she is a 'counterfeit human' (p. 102) and spends much of her adolescence struggling with her conception of her own humanity. Fowler's prologue introduces the protagonist as a prolific 'talker' (p. 1), which distinguishes her from her simian counterpart, but this part of her identity is one that she later realises was 'valuable only in the context of [her] sister' (p. 108). The departure of Fern is a moment of acute trauma for the Cooke children, with repercussions that resound throughout their childhood and adult life as they are forced to redefine themselves as independent people and confront the fact that they are more human than Fern and, hence, are thought of differently by their parents despite their initial intentions. Lowell struggles with this on a more intellectual level than Rosemary as he is old enough to feel a sense of betrayal – 'no longer believe[ing] their love for him was unconditional' because 'he'd been told to care for Fern as a sister … only to see her cast from the family' (p. 110). As Rosemary's narration sardonically notes, the fact that their father needed a counsellor as 'a trained professional' (p. 110) to tell them is indicative of his inability to relate to or understand his own children outside of a cognitive psychological framework. Fowler almost leads the reader to conclude that Fern was more a member of the Cooke family than their father was; this is further amplified by her decision never to give the reader his first name, unlike Fern, whose name is revealed to us even before her species is. Through this, Fowler implicitly endorses Rosemary's closeness with Fern as a core part of her humanity, while critiquing Rosemary's father's clinical detachment as something that impedes the wellbeing of others.

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

The revelation of Fern's 'essential simian-ness' is a startling turning point in the novel but is justified in Rosemary's mind in order to have the reader understand her as 'my sister' and not 'some kind of pet' (p. 77). Much of Part One and Part Two are devoted to the chronic trauma Rosemary and Lowell experience and the 'weight of Fern's disappearance' (p. 65), while simultaneously showing glimpses of Rosemary's memories of her family unit. When Rosemary invents a make-believe friend, Mary, she conceives her as a chimpanzee, as though humanity and animalism are interchangeable in her mind; but her list of 'things not talked about' contains the laconic entry of 'missing family members', hinting at notions of loss and repressed feelings of private pain (p. 21).

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

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Fowler showcases the duality of Rosemary's upbringing through such details. Rosemary develops an immense amount of empathy for people and animals but is arguably irreparably scarred by not only the loss of Fern but also her family's inability to communicate their feelings in the wake of this. In this sense, Rosemary's mother's aphorism that they are 'completely beside [them]selves' (p. 98) rings true in that they each undergo profoundly human emotions of grief, confusion and anger; but when Rosemary is finally reunited with Fern after twenty-two years apart, she feels as though she is 'looking in a mirror' (p. 308), suggesting that there is an undeniable bond between humans and animals with shared experiences. Hence, the novel reveals the depths of human connections, inviting the reader to look beyond human-ness or even 'simian-ness' (p. 77) to observe the humanity within.

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

To this end, Fowler's novel explores Rosemary and Fern as equally complex characters with distinct personalities and values as well as unique relationships. Thus, through the sisters' attachment to and identification with each other, Fowler elucidates the importance of connectivity as a cornerstone of human experience.

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

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We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves **by Karen Joy Fowler**

b) Analyse the effect Rosemary's family members have on her growth in the novel.

In her 2013 novel *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*, Karen Joy Fowler explores the tensions and tragedies that reverberate through the Cooke family and have particularly stark ramifications for the development of the protagonist Rosemary. Rosemary's life is irrefutably shaped by her unconventional childhood experiences and the loss of her simian sister Fern from their unorthodox nuclear family. Moreover, Fowler's non-linear narrative allows her to explore the long-term effects of this, as does Rosemary's retrospective narration that looks back on the events of her past with the advantage of her adult perspective and experiences. Each of Rosemary's family members plays a role in moulding her sense of self, in both deliberate and unintended ways, making for a complex depiction of family and dependency.

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

2. establish and maintain the role of essay writer and relationships with readers

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

Even prior to Fern's 'disappearance' (p. 65), Rosemary's relationship with her parents is a fractured one. Harlow's passing remark that the name Rosemary means 'remembrance' (p. 11) is unwittingly prescient; Rosemary possesses an excellent memory and is thus all too aware of her parents' failings when she reaches adulthood and is able to process them. Rosemary's father is introduced to the reader as a man who undermines and minimises her, remarking that her education is 'wider than it was deep' (p. 6) and, even when she is in a state of distress, changing his tone only to say that '[she's] always been a follower' (p. 15). He is a 'professional man used to having his own way' (p. 15) but is also an emotionally detached parent, more scientific than supportive. His commitment to involve his entire family in the 'Fern/Rosemary Rosemary/Fern study' (p. 99) is indicative of how he prioritises knowledge over the emotional wellbeing of others. Though he is not depicted as an abusive or entirely apathetic person, he is so governed by the 'interest of science' (p. 92) that Rosemary's impression of him as a 'kind man' is tainted by her 'Schrödinger's cat' memory of him running over a cat despite Grandma Donna's insistence that he would 'never, ever do such a thing' (p. 91). This uncertainty about her father's true intentions makes it challenging for Rosemary to establish any sense of security, and their relationship is irreparable as a result. Her father's unspoken but implied neglect of his wife's welfare also compounds the entire family's suffering; Rosemary's mother's nervous breakdown in the wake of Fern's departure leaves the two remaining children adrift and without any adequate parenting. However, Rosemary's mother somewhat redeems herself and has a more intimate relationship with the adult Rosemary when the pair move to South Dakota together

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

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and reunite with Fern. Given how catatonic she was throughout Rosemary's childhood, the fact that she is later subject to 'analeptic doses of righteous aggravation' (p. 6) is in fact a positive shift – she rebuilds her life with fervour, and Rosemary finds comfort in the presence of her mother being 'calm and not too sad' (p. 288). Although Rosemary's childhood was not defined by particularly affectionate or stable parental relationships, their influence is a major force in shaping her identity.

3. (cont'd) analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

8. use cohesive devices to emphasise ideas and connect parts of an essay

Where Rosemary is able to resolve her parental trauma, Lowell, by contrast, is not. Lowell is more reactionary when Fern is sent away, and his frustration over this perceived inequity manifests itself in redirected rage toward Rosemary for not 'keep[ing her] goddamn mouth shut' (p. 64). At eleven years of age, he leaves bruises on five-year-old Rosemary's arm for her decision to tell their mother about Fern's violent killing of the kitten, and though these physical scars 'would be hidden by [Rosemary's] T-shirt sleeve' (p. 64), the psychological effects of guilt are deep and enduring. Furthermore, Rosemary's jealousy over the closeness of Lowell and Fern contributes to her own misplaced sense of culpability and complex interpersonal issues evident in the 'levels of imputation' in her pondering: 'Rosemary is afraid that Lowell might not guess that Rosemary really doesn't want him to tell Harlow about Fern because Rosemary believes that once Harlow hears about Fern she'll tell everyone else and then everyone else will see Rosemary as the monkey girl she really is' (p. 189). This unpunctuated stream of consciousness is indicative of Rosemary's unresolved issues surrounding how her brother and, by extension, others perceive her. Likewise, Lowell's intrinsic familial loyalty that once propelled him to extract an apology out of Rosemary's childhood bully and then take his sister out for ice cream 'with his own money' (p. 46) becomes warped after the loss of Fern, and he takes to 'stropping his stories into knives' (p. 58) to emotionally harm his family as retaliation for his own anguish. This self-sabotaging pursuit of justice later manifests in his animal rights activism, but at the heart of his otherwise admirable compassion for animals is his unaddressed trauma. The novel is bookended by the siblings being literally imprisoned but also metaphorically trapped by their pasts, and only Rosemary is able to escape this.

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

7. organise and sequence subject matter to achieve particular purposes

6. select and synthesise subject matter to support perspectives in an essay response to an unseen question/task

Arguably the most influential family member on Rosemary's life is Fern – her 'red poker chip', her 'mirror' and, most importantly, her sister (p. 308). In hindsight, Rosemary is hyper aware that her childhood was 'defined by this one fact, that I was raised with a chimpanzee' (p. 77), though Fowler also reveals through Rosemary's more naive, child-like passages that she was not always so cognizant of this dynamic. For instance, Rosemary is competitive

1. use patterns and conventions of an analytical essay to respond to an unseen question/task

5. analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

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with her sister. Rosemary's first word was 'signed … at eleven months' and she spoke aloud 'at thirteen', while Fern could sign words at 'ten months' (p. 285). When her father discloses to her that Fern has been sent away to a farm with 'other chimpanzees' and 'lots of new friends', five-year-old Rosemary is 'instantly jealous' and wonders whether Fern 'liked anyone there better than me' (p. 90). This makes the sudden disappearance of Fern all the more significant as Rosemary loses her 'twin' (p. 79) and her frame of reference for her own identity. As a consequence of her unconventional upbringing, Rosemary feels as though she is a 'counterfeit human' (p. 102), associating more with her simian sister than with human strangers she meets. Although Rosemary and Fern grow up together as children, it is only when Rosemary can process the profound effects of Fern's presence and departure from her life that she is able to grow into a stable and independent adult.

5. (cont'd) analyse the effects of aesthetic features and stylistic devices in a literary text

3. analyse perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in a literary text

Ultimately, Fowler presents the reader with a seemingly inescapable family past that pervades Rosemary's life but also celebrates Rosemary resolving and learning from these experiences to construct a new identity. Hence, Fowler suggests that while family can have lasting impacts on one's wellbeing and self-esteem, we should nevertheless strive for freedom and empowerment by defining our own sense of self irrespective of this influence.

4. analyse the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs underpin a literary text and invite audiences to take up positions

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