



BOARD OF STUDIES  
NEW SOUTH WALES

1999 HSC  
English 3 Unit  
Enhanced  
Examination Report

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## Introduction

### Candidature

In 1999, 1464 students sat for the English 3 Unit Examination. They attempted two questions, one for each elective. The examination was two hours in length.

### Breakdown of Electives

Q1	Shakespearean Comedy	528
Q2	Contemporary Australian Drama	154
Q3	Chaucer: 'The Canterbury Tales'	232
Q4	Yeats: The Later Poems	776
Q5	The Study of the Sonnet	120
Q6	Utopias and Anti-Utopias	598
Q7	The Novel of Awakening	332
Q8	Modern Prose	170
Q9	Australian English	18

### Note on Responses Quoted in this Report

The sample essays have been reproduced exactly as they appeared to the marker. They include spelling mistakes, faults in sentence construction and sometimes poor grammar. The reader is reminded that they were, of course, produced under examination conditions and are very much first draft essays.

The responses quoted here are not necessarily from the top of the range. For example, a 'A' reproduced here may have attained 25/25 or it may be from the lower end of the scale, gaining, say, 22/25.

## **HSC Marking Structure and Procedures**

### **Marking Teams**

In 1999 there were four marking teams, with eight markers in the two Poetry/Shakespeare teams and six markers in the two Fiction/Drama teams. Three teams were corporate and one team was domestic. Corporate teams worked fixed hours (4pm-9pm weekdays; 9am-5pm Saturdays, with a lay night on Fridays); domestic teams marked at home but reported back to the Senior Marker every second night. The teams were made up of tertiary and secondary teachers from across both government and non-government sectors. The teams were briefed together for the first eight hours to achieve a common standard across domestic and corporate marking.

Markers were required to have taught the course within the last three years or to have taught first year English at university in the past two years.

### **Briefing and Pilot Marking**

The marking process began with the setting of the standard. This was done by very experienced Senior Markers and the Supervisor of Marking who have an historical perspective of what the standard has been over the past few years. They firstly looked very closely at the questions on the paper and then read across a wide sample of scripts to see what the candidates across the state had done with the questions on the paper. The scripts were then ranked and a generic standard was agreed upon so that marking across electives used the same standard.

Each question was marked out of 25. The 25 marks were arranged in grades A to E (see p 8). Markers, who were briefed by Senior Markers to understand and recognise the established standard, were instructed to assign each script with a grade first and then a mark within that grade. No target proportion in any grade is predetermined at 3 Unit level.

Every candidate attempted two questions, each from a different elective. Students had an hour to answer each question at 3 Unit level, unlike other English papers where students usually have 40 minutes to complete an essay. Each essay was then marked 'blind', once by a marker from one group, then by a marker from the second group. In each case the second marker had no idea of the first mark awarded.

Thus, all scripts in the 3 Unit examination were marked by at least two independent markers from different groups at different stages of the marking operation. Scripts were monitored closely during the marking process, particularly when they presented an argument or individual view outside the usual parameters of the candidature. These scripts received close scrutiny by Senior Markers, and markers were encouraged to identify any script with which they were not immediately comfortable in assigning a mark. The script was then discussed with either another member of the group or with the Senior Marker, and a grade was agreed upon.

Markers were reminded that they were ranking the scripts and that they were rewarding what the student had written, not penalising for what the student had left out or because the student did not supply what the marker had expected as a response. (These essays are written under examination conditions and markers should expect imperfections in these draft scripts.)

### **The Marker Reliability Operation**

During the marking operation, once the pilot marking was finished, the markers recorded the marks awarded for each question on tally cards which were then analyzed daily. Statistical reports were produced which assisted the SOM and the SMs to ascertain whether the markers were spreading their marks, marking too hard or too generously. Feedback was then given to individual markers.

Information such as the total number of scripts tallied, the mean of the total marks awarded and individual markers' means for each question and the standard deviation (spread) of the markers helped to monitor the process.

Other checks, such as systematic check marking by SMs, particularly in the early stages of the marking, and 'control' scripts assisted in ensuring reliability. Two 'control' scripts were sent around each night on different questions, so that markers could check themselves against the standard and against the group as a whole.

### **Resolving Discrepancies**

A pair of marks was considered discrepant if the mark awarded during the first marking differed by a predetermined set amount (which depended on the marking scale). If there was a discrepancy, a third marker, usually a Senior Marker, provided a third mark without knowing the two previous marks. The discrepancy was then resolved by another Senior Marker. There are relatively few discrepant scripts at 3 Unit level because the markers are very experienced teachers, often Heads of Department, who have a very clear idea of the standard historically.

### **Comments on the Marking Operation**

The actual marking was completed in ten days this year, the tightest time ever, as the 3 Unit Examination was so late. This included the initial briefing of the Senior Markers, production of sample scripts, briefing of the markers, pilot marking, first and second marking, marking of control scripts across groups, debriefing, final reconciliation of discrepant scripts and production of the Enhanced Examination Report. This achievement was largely due to the professionalism and commitment of the four teams who worked so well together, who are such experienced markers and teachers, and who are very proud of the work that they do.

## Marking Guidelines

The Marking Scheme is based on the Syllabus Objectives, as listed in the Board of Studies 3 Unit Syllabus (page 1) and a list of assessable outcomes derived from these objectives.

### Syllabus Objectives and Assessable Outcomes

#### *Objective 1*

To improve the ability to understand and appreciate spoken and written English, and to speak and write English well;

#### *Outcomes*

- a high standard of written English
- clarity and sophistication of writing style
- ability to make close reference to text and language to support argument.

#### *Objective 2*

To develop and refine an individual response to literature in English, both past and present;

#### *Outcomes*

- ability to develop a coherent and logical argument
- evidence of original and individual response to text.

#### *Objective 3*

To provide for deeper and more extensive study of particular authors and topics;

#### *Outcomes*

- high level of understanding of text
- relevance of answer to question
- detailed knowledge of content.

**1999 HSC ENGLISH 3 UNIT — ESSAY QUESTION MARKING GUIDE**

<p><b>22-25 MARKS</b></p>	<p><b>A Range: Excellent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– constructs coherent and logical argument</li> <li>– addresses the question</li> <li>– individual interpretation and analysis</li> <li>– close reference to text to support argument</li> <li>– clear and/or sophisticated writing style</li> <li>– detailed knowledge of text.</li> </ul>
<p><b>18-21 MARKS</b></p>	<p><b>B Range: Above Average</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– constructs argument</li> <li>– answer is relevant to the question</li> <li>– attempts an individual response</li> <li>– some reference to text and/or language to support argument</li> <li>– clear writing style</li> <li>– good knowledge of text</li> </ul>
<p><b>13-17 MARKS</b></p>	<p><b>C Range: Average</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– some cohesion in the argument</li> <li>– answer not always relevant to question</li> <li>– simplistic and/or standardised interpretation, tendency towards repetition</li> <li>– reliance on quotations with limited analysis of text and/or language</li> <li>– simple but basically clear writing style, some non-standard forms</li> <li>– reasonable knowledge of text.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7-12 MARKS</b></p>	<p><b>D Range: Below Average</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– augmentation of argument scanty and unsustainable</li> <li>– answer not obviously relevant to question</li> <li>– inadequate interpretation</li> <li>– use of quotations or references to text with no analysis or explanation</li> <li>– simple writing style, use of non-standard forms</li> <li>– limited knowledge of text.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1-6 MARK</b></p>	<p><b>E Range: Poor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– has clearly not read or has failed to comprehend the texts</li> <li>– candidate has run out of time, writes only a few words or lines</li> <li>– candidate has become ill (may be indicated by SOM)</li> <li>– non-native speaker of English with poor literacy skills</li> <li>– stress leads to ‘non-serious’ answer</li> <li>– submits a response with no relevance to the question</li> </ul>
<p><b>0 MARKS</b></p>	<p><b>NA/Not Attempted</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– completely blank booklet, or words equivalent to ‘Not attempted’ entered on the mark sheet.</li> </ul>



## General Comments on Response to the Paper

Students need to be aware that recent formats are not guarantees of the structure of the actual paper. Students need to be prepared to write on all texts, solely on any set text, or any combination. Some candidates had clearly not prepared three texts and were not prepared to write on all three texts.

The requirement to write on three texts did not prompt students to balance their treatment of all texts. Although it is not absolutely necessary to write equal amounts on each text, fair treatment needs to be given to the last text in order to adequately support a line of argument.

Most students had a sound knowledge of textual detail. Better candidates were able to engage with authorial purpose and move the discussion beyond narrative recount. The best answers were, in addition, able to make specific supporting references and include apposite quotations. The best responses demonstrated a coherent argument which was consistently advanced throughout the essay. Many essays began with a reasonable argument but failed to develop and sustain it. The best responses demonstrated a fluent and confident writing style and sophisticated vocabulary.

Weaker responses were marked by a failure to identify key terms in the questions. They tended to be inadequately argued and were characterised by too much discussion of narrative or general statements that were unsubstantiated by detailed references. Weaker responses did not always show the command of language and style expected at this level of English. At 3 Unit level, candidates are rewarded for the sophistication and fluency of their writing. The inability of some candidates to go beyond simplistic and inadequate expression was an impediment to their answering the question fully. (There were a few students whose suitability for the course was questionable.)

Where students are offered a choice of poems they need to carefully choose those which best suit the question and hence their line of argument. In poetry especially, some close discussion of language is appropriate but it should always be used in critical analysis rather than simply for its own sake.

An examination at the top level of English requires students to shape a response to a particular question. Students with prepared answers disadvantaged themselves this year as none of the questions lent themselves to a prepared response.

### Question 1 - Shakespearean Comedy

*Examine the view that 'Shakespearean comedy explores the power and delight in making illusions.'*

*In your answer, refer in detail to TWO of the plays set for study.*

*William Shakespeare, Twelfth Night*

*As You Like It*

*The Merry Wives of Windsor*

### General Comments

In general, this question was handled very well by candidates. Students who dealt with 'power' as well as 'delight' were able to draft a better answer than those who concentrated just on 'delight', and those who engaged with the key term 'explore' showed more depth in their responses. Weaker candidates tended to equate 'illusions' with masks and disguises and to recount the plots of the plays. More able candidates draw a distinction between illusions and delusions, and extended their inquiry to the play as a form of illusion, which enabled them to address theatricality in Shakespearean comedy as well as discussing the effects of illusions on audiences. Most candidates referred to 'Twelfth Night' and 'As You Like It', but those who wrote on 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' were able to take up the opportunity to explore a broader range of illusions within the plays.

The questions allowed candidates to demonstrate their detailed knowledge of texts as well as prompting better students to consider how Shakespearean comedy works as theatre.

### *Excellent response (A Range)*

Shakespearean comedy, explores through the plays 'Twelfth Night' and 'As You Like It' the power to mould the environment to the individuals specifications and the delight of marriage, symbolising the harmonising forces of the cosmos. These forces are engendered within the illusion and fantastical settings being that of Arden and Illyria. The ability to control one's environments is linked to the use of masks and disguises that allow for social and gender constraints to be discarded within the titles themselves can be seen the illusion created for the joy of the audience.

The 'Forest of Arden' appears as a mythical setting where dreams can come true. It is surrounded by the illusion that the inhabitants of the forest 'fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world'. While this is merely an illusion, with the forest dwellers being faced with the 'icy fang and churlish chiding of the winters wind', what the Forest of Arden does offer is a place in which, if only for a short time, to escape the 'painted pomps' of the 'envious court' allowing the characters to discover things about themselves either unknown or hidden in the behaviour patterns of the court. This can be viewed in the miraculous transformations of Duke Frederick and Oliver once out of the influence of the ambition and greed of civilisation. This highlights the power of an illusionary setting, that appears magical but in reality is an ambivalent entity, to change and influence the characters lives in untold ways. The delights of the forest are captured within the continuous renewal through escapism and transformation. Oliver is rewarded with the love of Celia, ending the 'true delights' of marriage. Therefore the illusionary myth that surrounds the forest of Arden allows transformations to occur and weddings to act as the reward.

Illyria similarly has an atmosphere of joy and festivity surrounding it that appears disjointed from the hard realities of the world the audience inhabits. Illyria is permeated by an atmosphere of 'oats and ale', the party atmosphere delighting the audience through the revelry of fun. Illyria without the supervision of an older generation means that the characters themselves and the masks and disguises they assume act as the barrier to love and self-fulfilment. Illyria allows both the characters and audience alike to play out their fantasies of very 'midsummer madness', knowing that the comic vision will be retained through the assurity of the play ending in the ceremony of marriage. The power of Illyria lies in the freedom yet sense of knowledge of the audience for a happy and satisfying ending.

The female protagonists in 'As You Like It' and 'Twelfth Night' both assume disguises as males. This allows for a sense of Liberty and freedom not usual for women in Elizabethan times. The conception of having a boy play a woman, assessed as a boy allows for the boundaries between reality and illusion to be blurred and distorted placing the females outside of social conventions. By assuming the guise of Ganymede, Rosalind is able to cast off the role of the passive female that hides her naturally vibrant personality. Shown in her impetuosity in failing in love. She loves under-heartedly, her affection having an 'unknown bottom, like the Bay of Portugal'. This is revealed through her disguises as 'Love's own page'. She is able to develop an intimate friendship with the object of her affection, Orlando, made on an equal basis between two mates. This friendship allows Rosalind to instruct Orlando and teach him how to love honestly and vulnerably.

Ganymede's influence helps Orlando to cast off his false disguise as the Petrarchan lover and be sincere and devoted in his affections. This means Rosalind and Orlando love each other not as members of the opposite sex but as individuals, a meeting of the minds show in the mock marriage. Therefore Rosalind moulds her world to her specifications through her disguise, intelligence and the casting off of Elizabethan conventions of propriety. The illusion of her appearance giving her a power over herself, unknown to a woman and the man she loves. A delight is transmuted to the audience through her vibrancy and in the perfect harmony of the unity.

The illusion of Cesario that Viola assumes allows her the privilege of getting to know Orsino on an intimate level, unhindered by questions of gender and sexuality. Like 'As You Like It', the disregard for social mores and conventions allows an emotional honesty inhabited by 'women's weeds'. Viola acts as a teacher to Orsino her discussions about her 'sister' and the constancy of her love, like 'Patience on a monument' contrasts with Feste's accusation that the arising mind is 'like a very opal'. Orsino comes to realise that men 'show much in (their) vows, but little in (their) love', but, is not liberating but prevents an involvement in life. His melancholy/anger is exaggerated, shown by his hyperbolic language and intense emotions:

'I'll kill the lamb that I do love.

To spite a raven's heart within a dove'.

This has biblical connotations and fore-shadows the marriage of Viola and Orsino, showing the great reverence he has for her. Ironically, while showing Orsino's love, it shows his pettiness and highlights the near danger Viola is in, her earlier comment, 'disguise, I see thou art a wickedness' culminating at this point. Viola unlike Rosalind is

unable to mould her environment, instead being forced to lose it to fate 'O time thou must untangle this net /It is too hard to knot for me t' untie'. What Viola's illusion does provide is the power to relate openly to the man she loves and influence him. Furthermore it grants her a full involvement in life that Orlando with his self-deceptive illusion is unable to experience.

The titles of the plays themselves 'Twelfth Night' and its alternate title 'What You Will' and 'As You Like It' pre-empt the sense of illusion and the power and delight inherent in it. 'Twelfth Night' is traditionally a night of revels where the natural order is subverted, the lesser characters being given the illusion of nobility. This idea can be seen in Malvolio's notion of himself as 'Count Malvolio' and his ambition for power and dominance. Fittingly, he is justly punished for his desires and this would have delighted the audience of Elizabethan times to whom a disregard for the doctrine of degree was a serious offence. 'What You Will' emphasises the power of the audience to 'will' the illusion and shows that the play was created for their delight.

'As You Like It' has similar connotations of being created for the audience's enjoyment and pleasure. It has often been described as an extended lyric and this sense of festivity coupled with the 'light, bright and sparkling' atmosphere would have delighted an Elizabethan audience with its debates regarding the pastoral mode and the stock characters with Phebe as the scornful mistress and Silvius as the sentimental lover. As the play is created for the pleasure of the audience it transpires within them a type of power over the playwright as to the illusionary world he creates.

The illusion is unable to be sustained and the audience must be transported back to the 'working-day world' that is 'full of barriers'. Rosalind unmask the play as she has been the character that has kept the play grounded by being able to synthesise illusion and reality as her 'mask' of Ganymede and the epilogue prove. Similarly, Feste, who has existed on the outsider of 'Twelfth Night' acting as the commentator of the action, unmask the play for the improbable fantasy that it has been, taking the audience to the world where 'the rain it raineth everyday' – Thus the illusions are destroyed.

Within 'Twelfth Night' and 'As You Like It' illusionary world are created, being both the play itself and the mystical settings within these plays. Furthermore, the female protagonists assume illusionary identities that grants them the power to cast-off the social and gender convention of Elizabethan England and not only liberate and free themselves but also those they come into contact with being the man they are infatuated with. Finally, the resolution is achieved and both the characters themselves and the audience members are delighted with the marital processions, heralding the return of harmony and reality simultaneously, giving the audience a sense of hope in their own lives. 'But that's all one, our play is done/and we'll strive to please you everyday'.

**Comment:**

A clean perspective focus on both the delight and power of illusion is what places this response in the A range. A line of argument is established in the introduction which is carefully developed throughout. The discussion of the plays is skilfully integrated and supported with detailed references and quotes. There is also a degree of consistency in the discussion, a lively engagement with the terms of the question, especially regarding the

power of illusion. Although initially the style is slightly laboured, fluency and ease of expression become evident.

***Above Average response (B Range)***

Shakespeare's ardent delight in creating illusions is rendered most effective by his simultaneous creation of reality. These juxtaposing forces add to the power and beauty of the illusion whilst adding the contrasting element of reality. Balancing both illusion and reality in 'Twelfth Night' and 'As You Like It' allows Shakespeare to effectively explore each one.

Shakespeare anchors each plays' action in illusory worlds. 'Twelfth Night' is set in Illyria a name originating from the words 'illusion' and 'elysium' (heaven). In addition to this, the play's action occurs on the Feast of the Epiphany, a festival where make believe abounds and nothing is as it seems. The bulk of As you Like It is also set in an illusory and fantastical world. The Forest of Arden initially seems a mythical world, with 'good in everything'. The country people seem content in this golden pastoral arcadia, happy to live simply and watch their 'lambs suck'. The effectiveness of these illusory settings is created through the strain of realism that is simultaneously present. Illyria is a place not only of illusions, but chaos and deception. Many of the characters are 'sick of self love' and the world contains constant reminders of life's transience. The arcadia of Arden in 'As You Like It' is contracted by the evil and corruption of court life. This realistic setting overflows into the seemingly paradisaical Arden. This is evident in the melancholy song 'blow, blow thou winter wind'. This song stresses 'man's ingratitude' and the 'bitter' cold of winter in the forest. Shakespeare emphasises the beauty of his illusory worlds by simultaneously creating elements of realism. These elements enforce the delights of the worlds, through creating a clear contrast to them.

Shakespeare's delight in making illusions is evident in the disguises and deceptions that litter 'Twelfth Night' and 'As You Like It'. The disguises in these plays centre around the heroines, Viola and Rosalind. Each characters 'usurped attire' creates an enormous source of humour and delight for the audience, as the confusion surrounding the characters grows as the plays progress. Viola's decision to present herself as a 'eunuch' to Orsino, Rosalind's disguise as a man because she is 'more than common tall' are prime examples of the delight Shakespeare creates through illusions. The disguises and resulting love triangles and confusions allow Shakespeare to examine a significant issue, androgyny. By Rosalind and Viola being desired by characters of both sexes, Shakespeare examines humanity's desire to transcend the boundaries of sex. The disguises of the comic heroines allow this issue to be examined. The power of this issue becomes a significant force throughout the play, the confusions of love and gender contributing to the examination of the delight in illusions.

The creation of Shakespeare's illusionary worlds allows the audience to accept the often ridiculous twists and turns of the plot. Many of the play's resolutions could only be effectively reached through accepting the power of these illusions on an audience. The sudden appearance of the third son of Jaques de Boys announcing the conversion of Duke Senior, is accepted in the illusory world of Arden. The unlikely encounters of Orlando and Oliver with the 'lioness' and snake is also perfectly acceptable in an arcadia. The coincidence of Viola and Sebastian being finally reunited also remains unquestioned due to

the framework in which the event occurs. These unlikely plots and scenarios are acceptable due to the prominent fantastic and illusory qualities that dominate 'Twelfth Night' and 'As You Like It'.

While the examination and creation of Illusion is a crucial element of Shakespearian comedy, its effectiveness as a dramatic technique relies to a large extent on the realistic elements that coexist in each play.

Shakespeare's fools play a crucial role in Shakespeare's comedy, becoming voices of reason and reality in illusory, and sometimes foolish worlds. In 'Twelfth Night', Feste comments on much of the play's action through music. When Sir Toby requests a 'love song', Feste sings a sorrowful song, lamenting love's transience, saying 'youth's a stuff will not endure'. He also provides an haunting, lyrical epilogue that dampens the joyous conclusion of the play, singing, 'the rain it raineth every day'. Feste's voice serves an important purpose in contrasting the joyous confusions, disguises and illusions of the majority of the play.

'As You Like It's' Jaques serves a similar purpose as Feste, becoming a voice of reality in a pastoral arcadia. His sarcastic references to 'Monsieur love' and the Forest itself provide a contrast to Shakespeare's most dominant focus, on the power and delight of illusions.

Shakespeare emphasises his concern with illusion once again in 'Twelfth Night', through Antonio, another presence of nobility in a predominantly illusionary world. Early in the play Antonio risks his life to save Sebastian, professing 'I do adore thee so, that danger shall seem sport, and I will go.' This intense love is betrayed at the play's conclusion, firstly through his mistaking Cesario for Sebastian, and secondly when Sebastian marries Olivia. In the final scene of 'Twelfth Night', Antonio is alone on stage, chained, amidst the delight and celebration that dominates the illusory world of Illyria. This character contrasts the delight, comedy and, illusion that dominates Shakespearian comedy, highlighting it through contrast.

Shakespearian comedy examines the power and delight of making illusions within 'As You Like It' and 'Twelfth Night'. This is done through the creation of the illusory worlds of Arden and Illyria, and through the plays' focus on disguise, the confusion of love, and the unrealistic nature of many resolutions within the plot. Shakespeare's focus on illusion can most clearly be recognised, however, by his implementation of aspects of reality in his illusory worlds. Figures such as the fools and Antonio create voices of reality that add an element of realism and balance the make believe of the fantastical disguises and settings. It is through this contrasting element of realism that Shakespeare's focus on illusion is most clearly evident.

**Comment:**

This script posits a number of arguments which need more development. There is a good, clear understanding of the action in each play and the importance of setting in Shakespearian comedy. The linking of setting to the delight of illusions and reality was relevant; however, the candidate needed more explicit detail on the use and abuse of power in these illusions. The related idea of androgyny was introduced (with some detail) which implied a change of power based on gender. The student did not fully develop the clear and explicit link between power and delight. This essay would rank as a high B response.

***Average response (C Range)***

Shakespearean Comedy explores the power and delight in making illusions, and this is particularly obvious in 'Twelfth Night' and 'As You Like It'. In 'Twelfth Night' the power of illusion and particularly disguise is demonstrated by the conflicts which arise from Viola masquerading as Cesario, and Malvolio being tricked into believing a letter was written by his love, Olivia. In 'As You Like It' the confusion which surrounds Rosalind's 'Ganymede' and Celia's 'Aliena' disguises suggest the power and delight in making illusions.

For the majority of the action in 'Twelfth Night' the main character of Viola is disguised as a male named Cesario for safety reasons following a shipwreck. Viola's disguise succeeds in fooling almost all of the play's characters, but namely Olivia and Orsino, and as a result Shakespeare creates a suspenseful 'love triangle' situation. The result is dramatic irony, heavily present throughout Viola's dialogue with lines such as 'I am not what I am', which not only demonstrates the power of illusion in that it can fool other characters in the play, but places the audience in a position of power by making them aware of what most characters are not. Such situations like a scene between Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Sir Toby Belch, which also involve some degree of illusion in that Sir Andrew is under the impression he is an intelligent, attractive and well coordinated man, not only demonstrate the power of illusion, but also create comedy and delight. This particular scene concludes with Sir Andrew prancing around the stage in a ridiculous and comedic fashion, with Sir Toby directing his movements, 'Higher! That's it....' As a result, the audience views the position of power Sir Toby is placed in, and the comedy and delight which results from someone taking advantage of the power of illusion.

However, illusion in 'Twelfth Night' can not only create comedy and power, but significantly something more. Maria, Fabian, Feste and Sir Toby take advantage of the fact that the puritan Malvolio wishes to be 'Count Malvolio!' and wed Olivia. A letter is forged by Maria placing Malvolio under the illusion that Olivia would like to see him in 'yellow stockings' and 'garters'. The immediate result is delight and hilarity for the audience, particularly as Shakespeare directs that the perpetrators of the prank be 'hiding' on the stage oblivious to Malvolio. However, there is a sinister dimension to the play added when the prank is taken to extremes and Malvolio is locked in a dark room under the illusion he is having a conversation with a priest who is in fact Feste. This scene suggests the power those who control illusion have, and the dangerous repercussions an abuse of power has, such as Malvolio's parting line 'I'll be revenged on the whole pack off you!'

However, the main plot's conflicts which arise from Viola's 'Cesario' disguise are resolved without a sense of negativity. By revealing her female nature, and with the entrance of Sebastian, Viola's supposedly deceased twin, the main love seeking characters are able to pair up conveniently. However, at one stage even Viola was a victim of her own disguise, such as the proposed fight between Cesario and the allegedly strong and brutal Sir Andrew. As a result of being intimidated into the fight, Viola experienced fear which suggests the dangers which can arise following the power created through illusion.

Likewise, in 'As You Like It', delight and power is created through illusion. Once more conflicts in the characters' searches for love occur, this time through Phebe's attraction to

Ganymede, who is a disguised Rosalind, and through Ganymede's befriending of Orlando, who in fact is in love with Rosalind.

The pastoral characters of Silvius and Phebe are obviously intended to love one another, however Phebe's affections lie with Ganymede, 'She loves me for my anger'. Despite the fact that Rosalind's disguise caused this conflict, she is able to exercise the power gained through illusion to right the situation, which would have proved comedic for the audience. Rosalind is able to convince Phebe to love Silvius, and thus the power of illusion is suggested by her actions.

However, Rosalind almost traps herself by her own disguise at one point, making evident that the power of illusion can often lead to danger. By befriending a love stricken Orlando, Rosalind is able to take advantage of her position and test Orlando's love for her, however, her own folly almost caused her to reveal her disguise, leading Celia to accuse her of 'abusing our sex'. Orlando's love struck state leads him to exhibit comedic behaviour, such as posting poems on trees which are soon mocked by Touchstone, '...must find love's prick and Rosalind'. This comic delight which is created for the audience is indirectly a result of disguise and illusion as Orlando's quest for Rosalind is hindered by her disguise and thus it is able to continue longer. This suggests the delight which can be created as a result of illusion.

The illusions in 'As You Like It' also result in dramatic irony being created which enhances the suspense and helps drive the plot. It also places the audience in a position of power as they are aware of what is actually going on in the play, which the characters are often ignorant of. By creating this irony, Shakespeare not only allows comic circumstances to arise, but demonstrates the power of illusion.

The action in 'As You Like It' is brought about more through dialogue rather than physical movement. The play features a number of songs and also rhyming couplets concluding poetry which entertain the audience and detach from the play itself to make it appear more realistic. Most of these songs are rich verse based on illusions, such as 'whoever loved that loved not at first sight', and other predicaments the characters face, which all directly or indirectly are a result of the disguises and illusions which have taken place. Thus Shakespeare creates delight for the audience also in the actual structure and performance of the play.

In both Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' and 'Twelfth Night' the power and delight created by illusion are evident. In 'Twelfth Night' delight takes place through comedic situations which arise from mistaken identity, and the power of those in control of illusion is suggested by the fact that Viola's 'Cesario' disguise, and Malvolio's forged letter create many conflicts involving most of the cast. In 'As You Like It' the disguises Rosalind and Celia adopt cause both hilarity and conflicts between most of the characters, thus suggesting the power and delight which is created through making illusions.

***Comment:***

This script shows a pleasing knowledge of the texts and adheres to the terms of the question. It shows persistence in analysis but is often rather simplistic and a little repetitious. It is a satisfactory answer, but somewhat limited.



## Question 2 - Contemporary Australian Drama

*Examine the view that 'a significant achievement of contemporary Australian drama has been the establishment of an Australian dramatic idiom.'*

*In your answer, refer in detail to THREE of the plays set for study.*

*Timothy Daly, Kafka Dances*

*Jack Davis, The Dreamers*

*Nicholas Parsons, Dead Heart*

*Hannie Rayson, Falling from Grace*

*David Williamson, Dead White Males*

### **General Comments**

Candidates were able to argue their responses from numerous viewpoints. Most students believed that there is an 'Australian dramatic idiom' but what constituted such an idiom was broadly interpreted.

More sophisticated answers explored what were perceived as the contemporary elements and directions of Australian drama and concluded that it had a specific character. In contrast, other strong responses critiqued the notion of anything as distinct as an 'Australian dramatic idiom' and placed Australian drama firmly in the continuum of international/universal dramatic tradition.

Less sophisticated candidates narrowed their responses to the question by seeking to establish the existence of a *uniquely* Australian contemporary dramatic idiom through a discussion of Australian elements such as theme, character, setting and dramatic technique. The weakest of these responses focused simply on what made the plays Australian or what the plays had in common.

There was some engagement with 'idiom' as the vernacular or as reflecting Australian language patterns but very few students sought to narrow the terms of the question to this single element. The evaluative dimension implied in the words 'significant achievement' was not widely taken up by the candidates although the better responses were able to effectively integrate this element.

Sound knowledge of the plays was in evidence and most students were able to incorporate a discussion of dramatic technique. The challenge of writing about three plays necessitated careful selection of detail to support the chosen line of argument. Most candidates dealt with three plays but discussion of the third play was at times very brief. The better answers integrated the discussion of the plays and used quotations sparingly and judiciously. There was some excellent discussion of the features of individual plays within the context of an Australian dramatic idiom. Most notably some students engaged in a sophisticated analysis of *Kafka Dances*.

The A range answers were fluent, articulate and focused in their treatment of the elements of drama, presenting discussion of both specific and universal dimensions in their delineation of what constituted an Australian dramatic idiom.

These essays integrated the discussion of the three plays, demonstrating skills in selecting appropriate textual support and in making succinct and significant observations. Some excellent responses engaged in a mature and serious critique of the plays. Discussion of dramatic craft, including an awareness of the power of the plays on the stage, was a feature of these very good responses.

Some excellent responses came from students who were able to argue against the notion of an Australian dramatic idiom and yet put a case for the strength and power of the plays selected.

B range responses, while fluent and confident in their ability to analyse the plays in terms of their contemporary Australian elements, were less confident in their definition of idiom.

Answers generally demonstrated very good knowledge of the plays as drama through their engagement with the dramatic techniques. While discussion of issues was common these essays were able to go beyond theme to be more comprehensive in their support of the existence of an Australian dramatic idiom.

Answers in this range at times integrated their discussion of the three plays but frequently dealt with each play separately.

The C Range responses generally offered an issues-based treatment of the plays, asserting the existence of an idiom rather than substantiating it through a careful line of argument.

Some candidates looked at the common elements of the plays without making the connection with the Australian dramatic idiom. There was a tendency to retell the plot of a play or to describe a complete scene rather than select judicious examples from the text to support an idea.

These scripts had a less developed understanding of dramatic technique and at times misused theatrical terms. They identified (rather than demonstrated) the purpose or effect of such techniques. While candidates were able to deal with three plays, the treatment was sometimes unbalanced indicating a poor allocation of time.

D range responses were highly narrative treatments of the plays. Often these scripts did not respond to the question or had an invalid argument.

Answers tended to be brief with few detailed references to the texts.

Responses which dealt superficially with only two texts generally found themselves in this range.

### ***Excellent response (A Range)***

This view states that contemporary Australian drama, as a unique and separate form, has established a dramatic mode or idiom which is individual and distinctive. The style, characterization, content and techniques of much contemporary theatre in Australia suggest that the mode created is one which explores issues relevant to today's society in Australia, doing so in a variety of naturalistic and non-naturalistic ways, using idiosyncratic characters and drawing on a variety of theatrical techniques. These goals are suggested by plays such as 'Dead White Males' by David Williamson, 'Falling From Grace' by Hannie Rayson and Timothy Daly's 'Kafka Dances'. These plays achieve this charter with varying

degrees of success, but the overall impression given by contemporary Australian drama supports the view that such a dramatic idiom has been established.

The content of these three plays reveals issues pertinent to today's Australian society. 'Dead White Males' deals with academia and ideology, particularly those ideologies which the playwright sees as suspect. 'Falling From Grace' is an exploration of women's roles in modern society, as mothers, business women and friends. It is more universal but less successful in its aims. 'Kafka Dances' is more obliquely relevant to modern Australia, being set in Austria in the 1930s. Yet its treatment of the enigmatic doubt about the role of art and creation in a normal life is highly appropriate when viewed by a society such as ours, still recovering from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon of the cultural cringe. The suspicion with which Franz, the protagonist, approaches his calling as a writer ('I can love, or I can create, but not both'), and his ultimate acceptance of this calling reflect insightfully on art as a cultural activity in modern Australia.

Set in the high flying business world of a magazine editorial office, 'Falling From Grace' is obviously geared toward a universal, 'global village' mentality. The punchy dialogue, Americanisms ('Nikes' and 'Geesus' notably) and lack of Australian colloquialism support this. However, a lack of insightful content and an inexplicable tendency of the playwright's to undermine her female characters' integrity, prevent the expression of any profound insights on women's roles in Australia, or anywhere else. Although Rayson aims for universality, the scope of her plot is trivial and uninteresting and the play fails to be distinctive or impressive in terms of content.

'Dead White Males' is undoubtedly the most Australian of the plays in terms of content. References to fighting on the Kokoda Trail, the 'Waltzing Matilda Tavern' and the Valhalla cinema cement the play into a contemporary Australian context. Williamson uses his setting of a university to systematically criticise the perpetrators of modern ideologies such as radical feminism, multiculturalism and post structuralism. While doing this he examines interpersonal relationships and family life as well. Williamson's play is ideologically suspect. The most glorified character is Col, who is racist and hostile toward his family despite his innate generosity, and throughout the play homosexuality and the working class are also implicitly slighted (by ridicule of the writings of lesbian poet Cixous and the disappearance from the action of Melissa, the only outwardly working class character). However, the issues tackled by Williamson are undoubtedly pertinent to modern society.

One aspect of the established dramatic idiom of Australian theatre which separates these three plays as effective drama is characterisation. Rayson's women are unfortunately indistinguishable on page with little but Brock's pregnancy to suggest that they would be visually otherwise. They speak the same bland television language, and have no discernible traits or memorable actions to prevent them from being monochromatic. Williamson's characters are no more skilfully constructed (with the exception of the impressionable and malleable Angela, the ideal mouthpiece for the playwright's ideas), but they are distinctive because they are easily identifiable as stock players of traditional Australian drama. Col is the laconic, misunderstood patriarch, Steve is the put-upon larrakin, Grace is the nagging harridan, Melissa is the street-wise and sexy student, and there are surreal appearances by Shakespeare as the living embodiment of good taste and correct moral rectitude. This array of archetypal figures certainly makes the drama effective, if not original.

By far the most idiosyncratic and interesting characters in any of the plays are those created by Timothy Daly. Daly's characters are vibrant and complex, effectively portraying their play's drama. Kafka himself is neurotic but 'passionate', and he is created strongly enough that the action of the play can be centred around him. The other characters are each paired with a parallel in the world of the Dream Theatre. This stylistic device is hugely effective, and the characterisation of this play is one of its most enjoyable and memorable events.

Stylistically, the plays vary widely. Williamson's action is largely naturalistic, but the presence of Shakespeare as a player in the action and a scene featuring 'demons' from Swain's past suggest aspects of surrealism. Rayson's play features short, punchy scenes, sometimes only one or two lines long. There are several settings, many scene changes, and the hyper-realist dialogue (with the exception of witty but trite punch lines at the end of scenes) suggests that the play is better adapted to a televisual, rather than theatrical medium. Neither of these plays relies strongly on theatrical style or techniques to express its insights. Rayson and Williamson use dialogue in a direct way to convey their concerns to the audience.

Daly, by contrast, uses a wider variety of techniques in his arguably superior play. The dual realities in which Kafka lives suggest both surrealism and expressionism. Daly calls on music, mime and symbolism to more subtly and evocatively present his insights about the conflict inherent between life and art. While much of the dialogue in Kafka's home is naturalistic, the Dream Theatre, 'tinged with the bizarre' is grotesquely and fascinatingly heightened. The movement as well as the dialogue here is other worldly, and this seduces and captivates the audience as it does Franz.

These plays are markedly different, and, I would certainly argue, not of equal standard. However, in their aims to communicate ideas to their audience, they call upon similar standards of content, characterization and style. They achieve their aims in different ways, and with different levels of success, but it is the combination of these aims which I would argue creates a distinctive Australian idiom, the establishment of which has certainly been a significant achievement of playwrights such as David Williamson, Hannie Rayson and Timothy Daly.

***Comment:***

This essay engages directly with the question establishing a clear and personal definition of an Australian dramatic idiom. It avoids the trap of uniqueness, systematically exploring the elements identified as emblematic of the notion of idiom. This student demonstrates an excellent understanding of both dramatic technique and the ideas explored by the playwrights.

This is a sophisticated and articulate critique of the plays, presented effectively within the framework of the question.

***Average response (C Range)***

The contemporary Australian dramas 'Dead White Males', by David Williamson, 'Dead Heart', by Nicholas Parsons, and 'The Dreamers' by Jack Davis, all demonstrate the establishment of an Australian dramatic idiom. These three plays demonstrate a characteristically Australian feel, whilst all telling different stories using different dramatic

techniques in order to convey their themes. They are, obviously, all set in Australia; 'Dead White Males', in an urban/suburban setting, 'Dead Heart' in outback Australia and 'The Dreamers' in Western Australia. There is also a similarity of themes throughout the three plays. Certainly education, family, and equality play an important part in all three. Finally, the devices used by all three plays are different, but certainly are relative to the exact message the playwrights are attempting to convey to the audience.

The settings are important in all three plays, and these are certainly all very recognisably Australian. The home and University in 'Dead White Males' are the types of places any urban/suburban family would be familiar with. These everyday settings lend the play a real Australian feel and evoke an empathy from the audience from the very opening of the play.

'Dead Heart' takes its audience to the outback, the dead heart of our country. This scene is one which is recognisably Australian, that is, recognisable as Australian fairly universally. This setting has the effect of placing this story, and the contentious issue it discusses, at the very heart, the centre of Australia. This is evidently an effective device. The setting of 'The Dreamers' is one which would immediately evoke a sense of empathy from any person who lived in that region. There is no attempt by Davis to make this setting in Western Australia seem romantic, beautiful, or even very interesting, and it is in this brutally honest way that Davis delivers his message. The settings of all of these plays contribute the establishment of an Australian dramatic idiom by making them all recognisably Australian, and all very central to the main point of the playwright.

The most striking similarity that can be noted throughout the three plays is the correlation of themes. All three plays make comment about education, the family in contemporary Australian society, and equality. 'Dead White Males' is evidently very concerned with the higher education system in Australia. Professor Swain would hopefully be an exaggeration of university professors, but this exaggeration is being made by Williamson to raise the issue of education in the minds of the audience. This one man has the power or, he believes, the absolute duty to indoctrinate the students with his own personal ideology. The penalty for not subscribing is failure. The system of education where it is even possible for this to happen surely needs to be looked at. The question of education is also raised in 'Dead Heart', but with different implications. Tony tells a young Aboriginal boy, 'get back in that classroom. You wanna be an ignorant blackfella all your life?'

Educating these people is seen as highly important by some members of the Aboriginal community, as well as the White community which will be educating them. However, it becomes apparent in this play that the 'white' education can be seen to be a removal from the Aboriginal people's traditional way of life – it is teaching them things that traditional Aboriginals would be loath to have them learn. Education is looked at once again in 'The Dreamers'. The young girl Meena evidently has great potential as a student, however her lot in life prevents her from excelling. The constant interruptions from her brother, to help him with his own homework and from her mother, to perform domestic chores around the house, see her being pulled away from learning. By the end of the play she has practically given up on it and has taken up with a boyfriend instead. This comment on the failings of education is certainly echoed throughout the other two plays.

The theme of the family is also common to all three plays. 'Dead White Males' concerns itself with the gender debate. Much of this controversy is derived from Swain's teachings

and his espousal of the 'feminist multiculturalist project'. In order to prove Swain's theories Angela decides to investigate her own family. By exploring this complex group she comes to the conclusion that Swain is wrong. However, in this pursuit the concept of family is thrown around a lot. The different types of relationships in the modern family, the changing gender roles, the closeness of some family relationships compared to others, all of these concepts are considered in 'Dead White Males'. 'Dead Heart' looks at the importance of family and one's own tribe. Certainly the idea of family loyalty is explored within the Abirugubak cinnybutt:- the payback at the start is just one example. Another prime example is Tjulpu's murder of Tony, in order to avenge his father's death. This sense of family is very strong. The Dreamers looks at an Aboriginal family, shows the cracks and tears that appear in this fragile fabric as a result of the forced assimilation with white society. These people simply aren't equipped to deal with the loss which they feel and the tumultuous existence they must lead, and this is shown most in the family home.

The notion of equality is explored in depth in all three plays. 'Dead White Males' explores the notion of equality between males and females. In staging this debate Williamson uses Shakespeare to represent the past and the perpetual patriarchal dominance throughout history, and Swain to present the feminist movement. Angela's mother, Sarah is also a representative of the feminist movement. As this debate slides back and forth with Angela acting as somewhat of an adjudicator the conclusion is reached; that while things can get better than they are, man and woman are too fundamentally different to achieve complete equality. 'Dead Heart' and 'The Dreamers' both explore the notion of equality between white and aboriginal Australians. 'Dead Heart' does this in more of an obvious way, with David attempting to stand in between a conflict between Roy and Poppy. This clash of the cultures shows that equality can never really be reached because no one is prepared to compromise that much, the cultures are simply too different to co-exist equally.

The similarities of the three plays 'Dead White Males', 'Dead Heart', and 'The Dreamers', are not the aspects which demonstrate the establishment of an Australian dramatic idiom. It is the spirit and the feel of the message which their authors are trying to portray. It is the distinct Australian flavour about all three which is derived from the setting, the characters and the contemporary Australian issues which are discussed in the plays. In this way these plays, and plays like these, have established an idiom of drama which is truly and distinctly Australian, and most certainly contemporary.

***Comment:***

This script struggles to come to terms with the question, presenting a line which identifies setting, theme and dramatic technique. While it refers to the question in the opening and closing paragraphs, much of the essay simply compares the 'Australian' elements of the plays rather than presenting a clear view of an 'Australian dramatic idiom'. It does not, in fact, address dramatic technique.

General knowledge of the three texts is clear but there is very little specific textual support. The playwrights' ideas are identified not analysed. Expression is unsophisticated and characterised by some non-standard forms and simple sentence construction. This is a basic response to the question.

### Question 3 - Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales

*'Chaucer delights in the representation of deception and self-deception.'*

*What evidence of this do you find in the General Prologue and either The Pardoner's Tale or The Wife of Bath's Tale (including their prologues).*

#### General Comments

Most candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of one or other of the tales (and its prologue) but some candidates appeared to be less familiar with the *General Prologue*. Others restricted their use of the *General Prologue* to the portraits of the Pardoner and the Wife of Bath and this limited the scope of their examination of deception and self-deception in it. Weaker students concentrated on finding examples of deception and self-deception in the plot of the Tales and showed little awareness of narrative complexity in the work.

Few candidates linked the key term 'delights' with any consideration of Chaucer's poetry; those who did wrote impressively about the representation of deception and self-deception at different levels of the narrative structure of 'The Canterbury Tales'. Candidates who addressed the key term 'representation' were also able to demonstrate a more sophisticated analysis of the way the texts work.

#### *Excellent response (A Range)*

The representation of deception and self-deception and the irony this creates in Chaucer's 'The Canterbury Tales' plays a crucial role in achieving Chaucer's didactic and entertaining purposes. Evidence that Chaucer delights in these representations lies in the fact that through the elaborate framework of the tales, as well as various rhetorical and poetic features, Chaucer draws his audience to 'walk' with him as such. Hence as the reader is delighted by the representations created through the context, we naturally infer that Chaucer himself delights in them also. The evidence throughout 'The Canterbury Tales' that Chaucer delights in the representation of deception and self-deception comes through two main points: the fact that the audience delights in these qualities of the work and the fact that the audience is drawn to react from Chaucer's point of view.

In the General Prologue to the Tales there are many noble and upstanding characters such as the knight and the Poore Personn, but the most colourful and vibrant characters that catch the imagination of the audience are those that are not entirely what they seem. Such an effect is achieved deliberately through Chaucer's arrangement and selection of information, his diction and the poetic movement of the description of each character. As the audience we are deliberately manipulated to delight in these characters.

The Prioress's description emphasises the tantalising ambiguity of her nature, which is perhaps best expressed by the final line which tells us of the motto on her badge, 'Amor Vincit Omnia' or 'Love Conquers All', but is this sacred or profane love? The nun is described in terms of a Lady of the Court, she is sentimental, but only to puppies and mice. The final rhyme of the otherwise regular and calmly paced description is discordant, '...write a Crowned A/ 'Amor Vincit Omnia' which alerts the reader to the inappropriate nature of her character. Indeed, on further thought it is realised that she should not really be on the pilgrimage at all, but in her convent. Such deception, the difference between what the Prioresses should be and what she is, captivates and entertains the audience while

subtly criticising the practices of the church. The naïve narrator or the ‘Pilgrim’ Chaucer is deliberately used by the author to point out this deception, by admiring the prioresse for all the qualities of a lady and none of those of a nun.

From The Prioresse, Chaucer moves in quick progression to the Monk, and then the Friar, both religious characters increasingly inappropriate for their positions. They all deceive our narrator, but the ironic distance Chaucer creates allows the audience to rise above this and be both delighted and taught. The monk is described as a ‘manly man’ with forceful poetry often emphasised by alliteration as in this case. The audience is positioned with Chaucer to laugh at this deception of the narrator. The bitterness of the irony is increased with the ‘wantown’ Frere who is constantly referred to as ‘worthy’ drawing a comparison with the ‘varray, parfit gentil Knyght’. Such a comparison criticises the Frere, but the audience gets the idea that Chaucer is more amused by the Frere’s deception than shocked or outraged.

Although these examples are all of religious characters there is other evidence of Chaucer’s delight in the deception of the Narrator by the pilgrims in the General Prologue. In many cases this too falls under self-deception as another layer of irony is created by the fact that many of the characters do not realise it themselves. The Merchant with ‘the forked berd’ is immediately recognised by the audience as a morally reprehensible character because of the evil connotations of Chaucer’s imagery. But he boasts of his successful, illegal business deals and the narrator admires him for them, despite the fact that the Merchant is actually in debt.

One of the most colourful and vibrant characters of the Tales is the Wif of Bathe, in both her own Prologue and Tale and her description in the General Prologue the vibrancy of her language and rolling confident beat of her poetry delight the audience. The way in which she tells of the deception of her husbands and her own inconsistencies and self-deception help to create her character and it is her character that allows Chaucer to entertain his audience.

In the General Prologue she is ‘Gat-toothed’ with her red stockings on and her pounds of scarves upon her head. An amusing and enlivening description in which Chaucer selectively follows the manner of Cicero description to capture the essence of her personality and imply the world in which she lives. From the very beginning it is obvious Chaucer wishes his audience to empathize with the Wif, she is irresistible because she admits her main flaws and refuses to find anything wrong in them.

The Wif’s Prologue is distinct from all others because of its excessive length. She works long and hard to make her points, repeating the same basic idea in many different ways, often with reference to texts such as the Bible, and this type of argument characterises her. It is indeed the very way in which she eventually gained ‘soverayntee’ in all her marriages and while telling us her techniques she demonstrates their effectiveness. She tells of the way she treated her first three husbands ‘I made hem swinke’ even though they gave into her, and she digresses to make the point that women place little value on what they gain easily.

Evidence that Chaucer delights in representations of the Wif’s deception are the many techniques that Chaucer uses to make his audience delight in her deception, an integral art of her character. When her ‘voice’ dramatically re-enters at the end of her tale, mid line with a plea to ‘Jhesu Christ’ for ‘Housbands meek, younge, and fresh abedde’ her dominant



and colourful tone contrasts with the lack of description in the Tale and the Hag's calm and solemn tone, endearing her to the audience. The speech is typical of her and similar to that in her Prologue with enjambed lines to fit her extra thoughts into lines and the strong initial stress of 'Housbandes..'.<sup>7</sup>

When the Wif reminisces of her youth and charm when she married her fourth husband the rolling beat and force through alliteration of phrases such as 'stibourn and strong, and joly as a pye' as well as the characteristic domestic imagery all characterize the Wif in her youth. Not only Chaucer's portrayal of the Wif's deception, but the positive light in which her character as a whole is shown, draw the audience to delight in her, and through this, in her deception.

In the presentation of the Wif's self deception in thinking that she has treated all her husbands equally and that her Tale proves her point of the 'wo that is mariage' serves to further illustrate her character. Like the other aspects, it too is entertaining before it is didactic. The way we delight in the representation of the Wif's self-deception causes us to re-evaluate the way in which we judge our world and people in it, but primarily its effect is simply to delight.

The Wif seems to think that the tale of the Hag and the Knyght proves her point perfectly, but she neglects completely the contents of the 'sermon'. The ideas the old hag uses as arguments against the knyght, that 'gentillesse' comes from 'god allone' and that 'glad poverte is an honest thyng' are totally contradictory to the Wif's own sentiments as expressed in her prologue. These ideas are those endorsed by Chaucer through the whole of 'The Canterbury Tales' but their strong contrast with the Wif's own views as emphasised by the sudden intrusion of her poetic 'voice' as discussed previously, entertain the audience by helping to develop the Wif's inconsistencies. We delight in her as a real and believable character, vibrant and alive, both deceptive of others and self-deceptive.

The evidence of Chaucer's delight in his representation of deception and self-deception in 'The Canterbury Tales' lies in the fact that he deliberately draws his audience to enjoy these forms of deception. In the General Prologue the irony created by the improper praise of the naïve narrator, Chaucer is gentle and entertaining, and raises his audience to his point of view. Our relationship with the author is at times conspiratorial because although we realise we are yet another layer of deceived and deceptive audience/author, we are able to see the flaws of those we are above. This irony is never harsh or bitter, as his intention was to entertain the people of the court with his witty and clever representation of, and comment on, the life of his times.

The 'bad' characters within the General Prologue are the most interesting and realistic; they disgust the audience but delight us also with vivid description. Their deception of Chaucer the Narrator is deliberately pointed out by choice of language, and the movement of the verse, for the audience to see. Similarly, in creating the Wif of Bath as a wonderfully interesting and delightful character, through her voice, imagery and tone, Chaucer causes his audience to delight in her deception of her husbands, as she herself does. We also see her self-deceptions as an interesting character trait, although they do provoke further serious thought on the nature of 'gentillesse' and 'poverte'.

Through Chaucer's 'The Canterbury Tales' as discussed in the General Prologue and the Wif of Bath's Tale, the evidence that Chaucer delights in this deception is the fact that

through his characters, his use of irony and his humour, he causes his audience to delight in them also.

**Comment:**

This script is quick to focus on the evidence for Chaucer's delight in the representation of deception and self-deception. The argument maintains that the poet's purpose is twofold, to both instruct and to entertain, but that the primary emphasis is on the latter. The irony with which the portraits of various pilgrims are wrought in the *General Prologue* is discussed competently and the treatment of the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* and *Tale* are both likewise convincing. The style is economical but the content is sound.

The student engages with the style of the poetry, dealing admirably with technical features such as alliteration, narrative voice, metre, imagery and syntax. Appropriate evidence from the text is provided to exemplify the argument and there are no irrelevancies. Towards the end, the issue of audience reception and engagement with the text is raised as another useful plank in the argument to demonstrate Chaucer's delight in representing deception and self-deception. This part of the argument is not as deftly handled as other areas but the idea has obvious merit.

**Above Average response (B Range)**

Throughout Chaucer's 'The Canterbury Tales' the reader is given a thorough demonstration of the delight Chaucer expresses on several levels in the representation of deception and self-deception. Chaucer not only depicts characters who relish in the deception of others and pilgrims who are furtherly deceived about their own persona, he also cleverly feigns his own misinterpretation of the characters to allow their full nature to be revealed. Through the use of irony and satire, Chaucer can effectively portray his characters, while relishing in his own delight of reflecting the idea of deception.

Chaucer begins the Prioress's introduction with a physical description, noting her 'ful symple and coy' smile. The reader is also informed that the Prioress possesses many of the superficially important attributes of a nun; 'ful wel she soong the servyce dyvyne', and 'hire greatest ooth' is merely by Sainte Loy? Despite Chaucer's seemingly naïve praise, the reader is probed to question whether the Prioress' virtues are significant for an ecclesiastic to possess. As Chaucer launches into a lengthy description of the Prioress' table manners, this issue is raised further. Chaucer describes with an air of admiration how the Prioress 'let no morsal from her lippes falle', and how 'fulsemely after hire mele she raught'; the tone employed is serious and studious, yet about such a trivial subject that the irony emerges. The Prioress may seemingly possess strong qualities of a religious figure, however her devoutness appears to be all for show.

The cumulation of the Prioress' virtues is brought to a climax with the line – 'But, for to speken of hire conscience', implying that finally Chaucer is about to reveal traits in his subject which are those of a true servant of God. In medieval times, the word 'conscience' held serious connotations, as it was a description for 'God's voice in man'. However, the Prioress' conscience is undermined when we hear that her 'tendre hert' feels not for her fellow human beings, but for lap dogs and rodents. Despite Chaucer warmly describing how 'she wolde wepe, if that she saugh a mous caught in a trappe', and of the 'smal hound hadde she that she fedde', the reader can effectively understand Chaucer's full intention.

Despite the Prioress' longing to portray herself a 'countrefete of court', the reader is left with the impression that the Prioress, for all her sentimental feelings and fine manners, is not as devout as she would like to believe.

Chaucer's delight in revealing his fellow pilgrims as frauds continues with his description of the Friar. Chaucer depicts this character in an innocent tone, but the irony which emerges through the description reveals that while the Friar is a deceitful, corrupt ecclesiastic, Chaucer is most certainly aware of his full character.

Chaucer innocently comments how the Friar has 'made many a mariage of yonge women at his owne cost' – this mild remark, however, suggests not religious sympathy but perhaps a deceptive attempt of the Friar's to conceal the results of his seductions of young women. Chaucer, however, leaves the reader to reach this conclusion, as he does similarly in the revelations that the Friar is 'ful biloved and famulier' with 'the worthy wommen of the town'. When Chaucer boldly proclaims 'Unto his ordre he was a noble post', the reader is probed to consider Chaucer's intention. The comment does not suggest that Chaucer has been deceived into believing this character to be 'noble', rather it is a comment loaded with irony – Chaucer is obviously thoroughly enjoying himself in this description. In order to reveal the full extent of the Friar's wickedness, Chaucer speaks through the Friar's probable opinions – 'It is not honest, it may not avaunce, For to deelin with swick poroille as leppers and beggers'. This comment reveals not only the Friar's utter disregard for true Christian charity, but also the level of self-deception this character operates under. Similarly, when Chaucer innocently states that this character is 'Curteis' and 'lowly of servyce', the reader is able to gather that these attributes may be true of the Friar – however, perhaps only when in the presence of a privileged class. The extent to which the Friar is able to deceive his followers is demonstrated by this fact that his 'In principio' is 'so pleasaunt' that he is even able to gain a farthing from a widow with no shoes.

The Pardoner not only relishes in the deception of others, he is also naïve and ignorant of many aspects of his own character – this is certainly a character that Chaucer takes great delight in depicting. Chaucer begins his description by mildly remarking that the Pardoner comes from Rouncival; this would have had serious connotations to a medieval audience, who would have recognised the convents reputation as deceptive and corrupt. Chaucer, however, does not elaborate on this, nor does he so much as hint at any possible sexual relationship between the Pardoner and his 'freend' the Summoner, merely noting that they are singing separate parts of a love song, and while the Summoner's voice is like 'a stif boirdoun' the Pardoner's is overly feminine ('as smal as hath a goat').

The Pardoner's self deception is evident in the way he rides his horse- Chaucer's addition of 'the thoghte' in front of 'he rood off al the newe jet' described that the Pardoner in fact looks rather ludicrous. His deception of others is portrayed, however, more blatantly. While Chaucer notes that that the Pardoner could 'sell a storie' and easily 'sing an offertorie' these attributes merely assist the Pardoner 'through false flaterye and japes', to make 'the persoun and the people his apes'.

The Pardoner is certainly aware of his skills as a con man and deceiver. His motto, 'Radix nalorum est Cupidetoës', is utterly ironic, as the Pardoner proceeds to reveal that a specific mitten will allow the growth of a man's crops, providing he 'offre peas, or elles grotes'. Not only content in revealing his relics as highly dubious, the Pardoner proceeds to

proclaim that his entire religious façade is a fraud – ‘For myn entente is but for the wyne,  
And nothyng for the correccioun of synne’.

While the Pardoner delights in his own wickedness, however, notes of self-deception are evident – his claim to have ‘a jolly wench in every town’ is rather pathetic as Chaucer has subtly built upon a prior impression of him as a homosexual.

The Pardoner’s skills as a deceiver are evident throughout his tirade against the four primary sins. His forceful and emotional speech – ‘O gluttonye, ful of cursednes. O cause first of oure confusion’, is highly effective and it is plausible that the Pardoner does in fact receive a great deal of money from his work. His tale, however, though in keeping with his aim to deceive, has connotations perhaps even he is not aware of. The three revellers who ‘eten and drynken over his myght’ and take great delight in their wickednesse (‘And eche of hem at otherses synne lough) are largely representative of the Pardoner himself. Death is perhaps a formation of spiritual death, which not only the three revellers, but also the Pardoner have suffered. Unable to perceive this fact, as the reader and indeed his fellow pilgrims have, the Pardoner feels the confidence to once again offer his relics for money. The Host’s blunt reply humorously quietens the Pardoner, as we see his attempts at deception have delightfully backfired.

Through his exploration of the pilgrims, Chaucer has effectively demonstrated his wit and delight in irony through representing the themes of deception and self-deception.

**Comment:**

The question on Chaucer required students to address ‘delights’, ‘representation’, ‘deception’ and ‘self-deception’ and refer to the *General Prologue*, the prologue to a tale and the tale itself.

This essay is unbalanced in its presentation, with more discussion of the *General Prologue* than the tale’s prologue and the tale. This was an unusual imbalance as many candidates had sketchy knowledge of the *General Prologue*. It does construct an overall argument that attempts an individual response: that Chaucer depicts characters who relish their deception of others and pilgrims who are further deceived about themselves. The argument is extended to the idea that the author feigns his own misinterpretation of the characters to allow their full nature to be revealed. The discussion deals with both deception and self-deception and finds quite thorough evidence of both in the set texts. Excellent knowledge of the texts is demonstrated. The effective use of relevant and integrated quotations supports this knowledge of the texts. There is no consideration of the text as poetry or of the use of poetic techniques to develop the reader’s awareness of the issues of deception and self-deception; and there is no consideration of it to demonstrate Chaucer’s ‘delight’. The candidate does attempt to argue in this area with a brief discussion of Chaucer’s diction. (Very few essays dealt effectively with the text as poetry.) This candidate also demonstrates a clear writing style.

**Average response (C Range)**

While the deception of many innocent and believing parishioners by the Pardoner is obvious, as he himself admits it freely, and to a lesser extent the Pardoner’s self-deception as to his own abilities over the company of pilgrims, the object of Chaucer’s own self-deception is a subtler work of art.

The voice of Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales* has a 'two toned' effect through, and his voice can be divided into two characters. Chaucer the pilgrim, who accompanies his fellow travellers along the road to Canterbury is much deceived as to the nature of his companions, especially those of the clergy. His naïve and innocent ideas show that, in surface appearances at least, he believes in the virtue and morality of his companions, however unworthy some of them may be. In this way, it can be said that Chaucer the pilgrim is somewhat deceived as to the nature of his fellow pilgrims, and self deceived as to his own just of character. Fortunately, Chaucer the Pilgrim's wiser counterpart, Chaucer the Poet, redeems his character and shows us the true nature of his companions. Chaucer has created some vivid characters to express his views on the society of the time, and he skillfully shows that he is not completely deceived in his fellow companions using irony and sly wit.

In the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, we are presented with a cross-section of medieval society, from members of the clergy, to the Merchant, and the virtuous knight. While each of these characters have their faults and virtues, Chaucer uses the clergy in particular to express his belief in the decline in morals and values of that institution.

The prioress is a woman with seemingly great virtue and goodness, as Chaucer the Pilgrim goes to enthusiastic lengths to point out. However, behind the praise of her fashionable manners and beauty, Chaucer the Poet exerts some influence to point out her ambiguity. She wears a brooch, engraved with 'Amor Vincit Omnia' – Love conquers all – which in itself is ambiguous, as Chaucer may wish to indicate this as a breach of the vow of Chastity. It is nicely ironic that she wears this brooch on a rosary of green beads, a symbol of her holy profession. It is also ironic that the deceived Chaucer the Pilgrim goes to so great a length to point out her beauty and fashionable ways – feature which a Prioress would not be expected to have.

However, the Prioress' corruption – if indeed she is – stems more from naivety than from any great evil. Not so the Friar – and once again the deceived Chaucer the pilgrim blithely ignores the indication of his discussion of the Friar's characteristics – scornful of poverty to the extent he will take money from the poorest widow, and well acquainted with the inns and the barmaids – and proudly finishes with 'ner was there a man so vertuous'.

Deception is once again prominent in Chaucer the pilgrims discussion of the Pardoner. Out of all of the immoral clergy, the Pardoner is shown to us to be the most corrupt and the most loathsome, and this is proved in the Pardoners Prologue and his Tale.

In the Prologue to the Pardoners tale, the Pardoner reveals to the company how great his skills in deception are, and his motivation in deceiving the ignorant peoples he preaches to – a desire for personal wealth. The Pardoner is essentially a character of deception – that is how he makes his amoral living.

The Pardoner admits himself, to the company of Pilgrims, how corrupt and amoral he is – in this respect he has no self-deception whatsoever. The Pardoner will 'preach anything, even against the evils of avarice -...' *Radix molorum est cupiditis* – avarice is the root of all evil – if it will gain him wealth. His soul motivation is to convince the populace to give him their money – to 'yeven their pens, and namely unto me'. He far from being above hypocrisy in his preaching, as he himself does not believe a word of it – 'I preche agayn that same vice which that I use, and that is avarice'. Ironically, it was an apparent paradox

of the time that the artist himself - in this case an artist in preaching and storytelling – did not have to be a moral person to have a moral effect upon others.

The Pardoner does have a moral effect upon those he deceives, and he particularly draws them in with stories of his ‘relics’ – a sheep’s blade belonging to a ‘holy Jew’ – ie Jacob, which will cure illness in cattle, a mitten that will multiply grain. Chaucer uses the Pardoner to satirise this profession and their ‘relics’ – very few of which had any real holy value.

The Pardoner is such a success at deception as he is extremely skilled in the art of storytelling. He uses his body language to enthrall his listeners – ‘I streche farthe my nekke....and est and west upon the people I bekke’. He also uses his vocal skills – his voice he ‘rynge it oute as round as do the bell’. In this way, the Pardoner is adept at entralling his listeners, to whom he relates tales, or exempla, from the bible. The pardoner is a hypocrite in these tales, as he preaches against gambling, drunkenness and gluttony, telling how King Demetrius was sent a pair of golden gambling dice, Seneca, Roman writer and tutor to Nero – could not tell the difference between a man who was drunk and a man who was crazy, and how Adam and Eve were overcome by gluttony in the garden of Eden. However, the Pardoner himself tells how he gambles with his Parishioners souls, and will not start his tale until he has partaken of wine and cake.

The Pardoner Tale itself is in the form of an exemplum, and Deception once again appears when the three characters become confused as to the nature of Death. They go in search of a personification of Death, but once they find gold they ‘ney longer after Death they soughte’. Because they found gold and killed each other over it, they did find Death – though they were deceived as to his nature.

Chaucer delights in the representation of Deception in the Prologue, Tale, and General Prologue, making particular use of a character with such a natural capacity for deception as the pardoner. The Pardoner has great skill in deception – though he deceives himself when he thinks he can win over the pilgrims after having told them of his immorality.

Chaucer the Pilgrims own self deception over the natures of his fellow travellers is evident to, although Chaucer the Poet redeems him by his satirical and ironical influences. Deception is represented well throughout the tale, and the character of the Pardoner, though he has great skill in deception, remains fascinating and vivid in his cheerful cynicism and sly wit.

**Comment:**

This essay focuses in a fairly simplistic way on the way Chaucer deals with deception and self-deception. It gives examples of characters who deceive and are deceived from both the *Tale* and the *General Prologue* but does not deal at all with the notion of ‘delight’ or with how the poetry works to ‘represent’ the notions of deception and self-deception. There is some narrative representation but little discussion of poetic technique. This essay fits into the middle C range.

#### Question 4 - Yeats: The Later Poems

*'And what if excess of love bewildered them 'till they died?'*

How is 'excess of love' transformed into art in Yeats' poetry? Discuss with close reference to THREE of the poems set for study.

William Butler Yeats, *'The Wild Swans at Coole'*

*'Easter, 1916'*

*'The Second Coming'*

*'A Prayer for my Daughter'*

*'Sailing to Byzantium'*

*'Leda and the Swan'*

*'Among School Children'*

*'An Acre of Grass'*

*'Long-legged Fly'*

*'The Circus Animals' Desertion'*

#### General Comments

Candidates' choice of poems tended to enhance or restrict their capacity to discuss how 'excess of love' is transformed into art in Yeats' poetry. Weaker students tended to choose 'The Wild Swans at Coole' and 'A Prayer for My Daughter', and to focus their attention on what they knew of Yeats' life rather than on how his poetry works. Those who grappled with what 'excess of love' might be, and how it was transformed, wrote impressively about the three poems they chose. Those who ignored 'excess' altogether (or equated excess of love with rape) tended towards simplistic consideration of the poetry. Because this question asked students to concentrate on *how* the transformation was effected, candidates had the opportunity to link themes with a detailed consideration of poetic technique. When this was done the candidates tended to score highly. In general, candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of the poems and the question allowed a range of different ideas to be argued.

#### ***Excellent response (A Range)***

Yeats' poetry has been referred to as an 'objective correlative' for the poet himself, and as such, we see his verse evoke the strong emotions which are characteristic of the human condition. In keeping with his preoccupation with art and the creative process, we see that the 'excess of love' and passion in Yeats' poetry is often directed towards an entity, as well as towards a person. Ultimately Yeats' poetry shows passion for art to be more constructive than ardour for the reality of a human being, as the mutability and flawed nature of the human character inevitably causes disappointment. However, it is through his growing understanding of unity in the search for 'Truth' and spirituality that Yeats comes to understand that it is a unity of body and soul that allows for the creation of timeless art. It is thus that the mutability of human passion or 'excess of love' is able to be transferred into a 'moment to his own magnificence' in the poetry of WB Yeats.

Yeats' poems explore that nature of human feelings and passion – both for other humans and for entities or inanimate goals. Thus, we see that an 'excess of love' for the 'dream' of the Irish independence (exhibited by the rebels of the uprising in 'Easter, 1916') can be compared to the feelings that the poet has for the 'Ledaean body' of 'Among School Children', by which his 'heart is driven wild'. We are able to see that Yeats perhaps places greater value on the immutable nature of something like the creative process itself that gains 'all (his) thought and love' in the 'Circus Animals Desertion', because this process isn't subject to the same degrees of change as one's feelings of passion for those 'near (his) heart'.

It is 'The Circus Animal's Desertion' that questions the process of creation most ostensibly. Here we see Yeats mourn his perceived loss of his creative talents (which are symbolised by the emblem of the Circus animals, which until the onset of age were all 'on show'.) Thus, we see that Yeats perceives the creative process to be adversely affected by his changing physical condition. It seems that in saying that he must be satisfied with his 'heart' (here clearly symbolic of his own mortality), that he sees the creation of timeless art as being linked to one's ability to be immutable.

This attempt to achieve immortality is depicted in 'Sailing to Byzantium'. Here, the poet exhibits an 'excess of love' in his passion to achieve his goal – he is 'sick with desire' to free himself of the constraints of his deteriorating physical condition. The poet creates a picture of the natural, mortal world through the image of the procreating younger generation – 'the young in one another's arms,' and the 'mackerel crowded seas' (teeming with vitality and life.) However, the poet undercuts this seemingly positive image in his reference to them as the 'dying' generation. The alliteration employed in 'fish, flesh or fowl,' and 'whatever is begotten, born or dies', emphasises the mortality of this generation – an image seemingly in contrast to their present appearance of youth and life. It is their mortality, Yeats perceives that leads them to 'neglect monuments of unageing intellect.' Thus, we see the poet try to free himself of the constraints of mortality as he perceived that only then will his search for ultimate 'Truth' in the creation of timeless art, be possible.

Yeats then sees spiritual transcendence as a means through which he can transform his 'excess of love' into timeless art, which will be a 'monument to man's magnificence and immortal part of himself. He awakes a Platonic distinction between body and soul in his plea to be freed of physicality – 'conserve my heart away, sick with desire and fastened to a dying animal.' It is through his taking the form of the golden bird, free from 'any natural thing' that he believed he will be able to perform his artistic function for all eternity. The final words of the poem, what is 'past or passing or to come', mirror the structure of 'whatever is begotten, born and dies', however invert this to emphasise that Yeats' function here is not transient and subject to the passage of time, but rather, permanent and immutable, as is the nature of art. Thus, in 'Sailing by Byzantium', Yeats sees that 'excess of love' can only be transformed into art through a discarding of one's physical limits (a virtual 'old man's frenzy' against the ageing process) and a reliance on that unchanging part of oneself – the soul.

'Among School Children' explores the idea of unity, a concept perhaps applicable to a unity of the two parts of one self, the body and the soul, which Yeats described as distinctly separate in *Sailing to Byzantium*. The poem employs a series of parallel trinities in order to emphasise the apparent disunity between an ideal or image and reality, (and



concurrently, a disunity between ones spirituality and physicality.) Here, the ‘excess of love’ explored is that which is directed at both an ‘image’ that a nun worships, and the feelings a mother has for her own child. Yeats compares these feelings in saying that both kinds of images ‘break hearts’, as there is a disunity between the ideal of how, for example, a child is perceived by her mother, and the reality of what that child will become with ‘sixty or more winters on its head.’ The trinities that operate in the poem serve to emphasise the message that the poet is conveying. The three philosophers of Stanza VI each search for reality in a different place – Plato in unnatural ‘ghostly things’, Aristotle in nature, and Pythagoras in the creative process and art itself.

Ultimately however, the final images that the poem evokes reveal that reality is in fact a unity between an ‘image’ and the ‘Presences that passion piety of affection knows’. Thus, the poet discovers that a chestnut – tree is not its ‘roots’, ‘blossom’ or ‘bole’ but an amalgamation of all of these parts. Consequently, in terms of the process of creating art, it is only through a unity of body and soul that an ‘excess of love’ can be transformed into a successful end to the poet’s quest for the ‘truth’ and fulfilment in the creative process.

We are able to see in the development of the poet’s argument in ‘The Circus Animals Desertion’, that he has come to an understanding regarding the nature of the creative process, and the manner in which timeless art is able to be created. The poem charts his own artistic journey and progression from ‘Themes of the embittered heart’ to the stage where the mechanics of the writing process consumed him – players and painted stage took all my love /and not those things that they were emblems of.’ It becomes clear that the poet’s perception that art was completely linked to spiritual immortality, was somewhat misplaced. He comes to realisation in the conclusion of this final one of his later poems, that art in fact has its origins in that ever-flawed symbol of human mortality and thus he ‘must lie down where all ladders start/in the foul rag and bone shops of the heart.’

In this manner, we are able to see that previously, Yeats’ creative energies, his ‘excess of love’ was directed towards achieving spiritual transcendence, and rising above his own mortality, as he believed that it was only in doing such that he would successfully be able to create art. It was this perception that body and soul were distinctly separate, and thus age and the creation of art remained mutually exclusive, that led the poet to redouble his rage against ageing in the ‘Old man’s frenzy’ of his later poems. However, ultimately, with his discovery of the nature of unity, Yeats became able to see that in order for art to be created, that the ‘body is not bruised to pleasure soul’, that is, that the ‘excess of love’ must be directed towards achieving ultimate ‘Truth’ which has its origins in both mortality and spirituality, and a unity between the body and soul.

Thus, Yeats’ poetry charts the progression of his ideas on the creative process, and his corresponding views of ageing, spirituality and the nature of unity. Paradoxically, after scorning his own mortal human condition as being a ‘Tattered coat upon a stick’, and trying to achieve spiritual transcendence, the poet comes to see that it is only through a unity of the body and soul that truly timeless art can be created. Through his own poetry, Yeats’ ‘excess of love’ for his goal has brought him to this very realisation and allowed him to create his own ‘monument’ to ‘man’s unageing intellect’ in his own artistic creation – his poetry.

**Comment:**

This is an outstanding essay at the top of the A range. It has a clear line of argument, is well supported by analysis of the poetry and is fluent and sophisticated. The candidate has an excellent sense of what the phrase ‘excess of love’ means in the context of Yeats’ poetry and could tie it into an evaluation of how the magic of the poetry is made (that is, of how it is ‘transformed into art’). It also deals with some of the more complex poems in a very detailed and sophisticated manner.

**Above Average response (B Range)**

The quote in ‘Easter 1916’, ‘And what if excess of love bewildered them ’till they died’ refers to the physicality that obscures a hidden spirituality. In this sense, Yeats transforms ‘excess of love’ into art through his attempt to transform from the moral to the aesthetic. ‘Sailing to Byzantium’ is concerned with a journey from the physical to the immortal – and it is this ‘excess of love’ that transforms into ‘the artifice of eternity’. Similarly, ‘An Acre of Grass’ is concerned with a transformation brought about by a mind that is allowed to soar. Conversely, ‘Among School Children’ depicts Yeats’ desire to understand the forces that operate beneath the physical. In this sense through the discussion these two dialectics and the movement between them, Yeats effectively transforms ‘excess of love’ into art.

‘Sailing the Byzantium’ is concerned with a poetically imaginative journey between two worlds. Yeats describes his distaste for a mortal world, and then a transformation where he implores; ‘censure my heart away’ to allow his assimilation into the artifice of eternity.

Stanza One is concerned with a description of this mortal world (‘the young in one another’s arms, the birds in the trees’). However, this description is undercut by a note of scorn, ‘those dying generations’, and ‘fish, flash, foul’ where the speaker ‘spits’ the assonance to create the tone of distaste. The stanza ends with the idea that to be part of the mortal world, is to be part of what is ‘begotten, born and dies.’

Stanza Two describes the pathetic and powerlessness nature of the physical being. Yeats describes an old man as a ‘paltry thing’ and a ‘tattered coat upon a stick.’ However, the poet offers an escape from the bounds of mortality, by allowing the soul to ‘clap its hands and sing, and louder sing’. That is, the speaker is able to discard ‘every tatter’ in his mortal dress’ through an excess of love. The sailing image that ‘I have sailed the seas and come’ offers an expansion of boundaries.

The process of this expansion of boundaries is described in the third stanza where the poet implores his mortality to be consumed by ‘God’s holy fire’ so that what is left is a focus of absolute perfection (‘perne in a gyre’ / ‘gold mosaic on a wall’). This impure physicality is then discarded to allow the soul to metaphorically travel into the ‘artifice of eternity,’ where there is a fusion of the moral and aesthetic. Through this fusion, this excess of love becomes art.

Stanza four is concerned with a description of the ‘pure realm of form’ that is manifested metaphorically in the city of Byzantium. The speaker wishes that his bodily form be taken from art, and not from nature (‘as Grecian goldsmiths make’). This realm of the infinite and inimitable is free from practical purpose and moral imperative. The soul purpose is to ‘keep a drowsy emperor awake.’ The speaker has metaphorically achieved immortality

through living as art. Furthermore, it was the expansion of boundaries that enabled the excess of love and emotion to become art.

'Sailing to Byzantium' is concerned with a poetically imaginative journey between 'what is begotten, born and dies' (excess of love) to 'what is past, or passing, or to come.' In the same way, 'An Acre of Grass' is concerned with a movement from the bounds of old age, to a greater understanding of our human existence. With the onset of old age, Yeats describes the lack of emphasis placed on the mortal and a transformation to a mind that is able to pierce the clouds of obscurity.

The first stanza uses sparse and simple language ('picture and book remain') to describe the insignificance of mortality, much as in 'Sailing to Byzantium'. Yeats describes an old man's mind where 'nothing moves but a mouse' to describe not only the insignificance of the physical but at the same time, the emptiness of a purely emotional existence, ('excess of love').

The second and third stanzas are concerned with the methods of transformation between the moral and the aesthetic. Yeats is scornful of the merits of existential speculation. A mind that consumes its 'rag and bone' in his opinion, will never make 'Truth known.' However, it is through allowing the mind to soar, in the fashion of 'Timon, Lear' or 'that William Blake' that can allow the mind to achieve a greater understanding of their existence.

Indeed, it is through this transformation that a purely mortal and emotional existence is transformed into art. With regard to 'An Acre of Grass', the speaker achieves an understanding similar to the renaissance mind; ('a mind Michael Angelo knew') that is able to 'pierce the clouds' of obscurity and 'shake the dead in their shrouds'.

'An Acre of Grass' and 'Sailing to Byzantium' are in this sense, both concerned with a transformation from 'excess of love' to a metaphorical world that delivers a greater understanding. 'Among School Children' lacks this self-assuredness, and is purely concerned with an exploration of the nature of human existence, and that which lies beneath the moral and the emotional.

The first stanza of 'Among School Children' opens ambiguously. Yeats describes the speaker as walking 'along the long room questioning.' The speaker is not only questioning the children, but at the same time, he questions the nature of their youthful existence. The children are taught in 'the best modern way' and Yeats thus achieves a synthesis between the smiling children, and a 'sixty-year-old, smiling public man.'

Stanzas two to four continue to explore the connections between youth and maturity. Yeats describes a fluid notion of time where he links what is 'past, or passing, or to come.' Indeed, Yeats has the platonic idea 'into the yolk and white of one shell: to discuss the potential of the children that he sees in front of him ('I wonder if she stood so at that age'). Random floating images ('her present image floats into mind') and temporal shifts between the past and present evoke a strong connection between age and youth. The speaker draws a contrast between his once 'pretty plumage' and his present appearance 'comfortable mind of old scarecrow'. The links between the past and present, and between the present and the future create an image of a cyclical travel through life. Throughout these stanzas, Yeats views the mortal, and then connects it with that which is infinite and immutable.

Stanza Five is concerned with the description of a mother with a ‘shape upon her lap.’ Once again, Yeats connects this ‘surface level’ image to the deeper issue of potential. He contemplates the future of the child with ‘sixty or more winters on his head’ and asks whether the potential of the child outweighs the reality of his future existence (‘uncertainty of his setting forth’)

In the final stanzas, Yeats uses the image of a new born baby as a metaphor for the nature of our existence. He is scornful of philosophers like ‘world famous, golden thighed Pythagoras’ and ‘soldier Aristotle’ who attempted to impose a logical framework on their existence. It is this superficial existence (‘excess of love’) that Yeats argues is undercut by something greater that is beyond comprehension. It is this ‘ghostly paradigm’ that Yeats argues underlies our existence. For man to try to understand it, he is simply mocking something that he does not understand, (‘Self-born mockers of man’s enterprise’)/ A physical, mortal or emotional existence is only the ‘bole’ or ‘leaf’ of the ‘great rooted blossomer.’ Yeats poses the question, that ‘how can we know the dancer from the dance?’ and it is apparent that our humanity and spirituality are inevitably intertwined. It is in the embracing of this spirituality that ‘excess of love’ is transformed into art.

To that end, ‘excess of love’ is transformed into art in Yeats’ poetry through the transformation between the moral and the aesthetic. It is the contrast between these opposites that Yeats explores in ‘Sailing to Byzantium’, ‘An Acre of Grass’ and ‘Among School Children’.

***Comment:***

This response gives evidence of a thorough knowledge of the chosen poems. However, a clearer definition of how the student understood the key term ‘excess of love’ in the introduction would have focused their attention on this aspect. Indeed, the student does not really come to terms with what this phrase means. The student writes some two pages on analysis of the poems (albeit thoroughly) without drawing our attention to this aspect.

The key term ‘transformed into art’ needs a closer examination. With more attention to these aspects of the question this answer may have earned an A as the expression is of a good standard. The essay is certainly a high B.

***Average response (C Range)***

‘Excess of love’ is transformed into art in Yeats’ poetry through the poetic style and descriptions of this love and the feelings incorporated with in. ‘The Wild Swans at Coole’ discusses Yeats’ love for the swans and their youthful exuberance as well as their love and attachment for each other. In ‘Easter 1916’ Yeats recalls the excess of love that rebels felt for their country and discusses the consequences of these strong emotions regarding Ireland. In ‘a Prayer for My Daughter’ Yeats discusses and poetically described the strong, parental feelings of love and worry he has for his child. Yeats uses simple but descriptive imagery to display the ‘excess of love’ in his poetry. His use of rhyme and a specific structure also brings unity along with an obvious artistic quality to the poetry.

‘The Wild Swans at Coole’ is a poem in which Yeats observes, described and ponders over the swans he has been watching for nineteen years. It is obvious Yeats loves to watch these creatures as he described them as ‘mysterious’ and ‘beautiful’. He seems to find solice in the way they ‘paddle’ in the water or ‘climb’ through the air. The vivid picture of the

swans floating along 'lover by lover' emphasises the fondness these swans have for each other and 'their hearts have not grown old' shows the youthful love of the swans. The strong imagery allows the reader to comprehend the excessive emotions of love that are evoked by this scene with its 'autumn beauty' and 'woodland paths'.

In 'Easter 1916' Yeats discusses the excess love that his countrymen felt for their nation. They had dreams of change but 'they dreamed and are dead'. This clear and precise line seems to be an understatement of the huge consequences these rebels faced for their love. 'A terrible beauty is born' is repeated often to draw the poem together structurally, as well as emphasise the enormity of these people's sacrifice. Yeats knows that their love was so strong that they died for it, yet he wonders if it was all worth it. Yeats names the dead and seems to be eulogising them and their emotions in a poetic manner.

Yeats' extreme feelings of love and parental worry are clear and obvious in 'A Prayer for My Daughter'. The religious connotations brought with the title emphasises the 'excess of love' and also brings an artistic sense to the poem. Yeats repeats that he has 'walked and prayed' for 'an hour' and this also shows his strong emotions and feelings regarding his daughter and her safety. The idea of his daughter being 'half-hid' and asleep in her cradle seems to offer little comfort to Yeats as he continues to worry not only about the howling storm, but also the future of his daughter. These tense emotions once again emphasise the 'excess of love' that has been entrapped within the poem.

The simple, but extremely descriptive and evocative language used by Yeats enables his strong emotions and 'excess of love' to be encapsulated artistically within his poetry. In 'Wild Swans at Coote' Yeats artistically described the noise heard by the 'bell-beat' of the swans 'clamorous wings'. The alliteration of 'bell-beat' and the onomatopoeic feel of 'clamorous' draws the reader into the scene so they can sense the feelings and observe the poem through this artistic style. In 'A Prayer for My Daughter' Yeats uses poetic symbolism to illustrate his 'excess of love' and feelings toward his daughter. He discusses the linnet and its song and his hope that his daughter will be like the linnet and never torn 'from the leaf'. Yeats described the laurel and the tree 'rooted in one dear perpetual place' and these allusions to nature not only act as a vivid picture to the reader but also give an artistic feel and quality to Yeats' strong feelings of love and hope in 'Easter 1916' Yeats is poetic but simple in his descriptions of the people in his poem. 'A schoolteacher' and one who rode the 'winged horse', are simple descriptions but clear and thought provoking. The depth of their love is also emphasised poetically, but clearly and 'where green is worn' is an example of Yeats use of symbols to represent Ireland.

Yeats uses a specific style and structure within his poetry to not only bring a sense of poetic unity, but to also bring an artistic quality to the poems. 'The Wild Swans at Coole' seems to flow along with Yeats' thoughts and ideas, yet there is a deliberate rhyme scheme that adds to the poetic quality and works to make the ideas clearer. An example is the rhyme at the end of the lines in the words 'ring' and 'wings'. This structure allows Yeats to express his ideas on love and the swans in a manner that flows and runs together smoothly and artistically. In 'Easter 1916' the use of repetition is important in transforming the 'excess of love' into art. The repetition of 'minute by minute' emphasises the immediacy and urgency of this love for Ireland the repetition of the phrase 'a terrible beauty is born' proves the extremity of the consequences of their love. Yeats also uses poetic symbols such as the 'heart' to discuss love in this poem. In 'A Prayer for My

Daughter' the repetition of 'screams' emphasis the noise Yeats hears and also the strength and power found in his feelings of love. The poem uses a structure which flows with Yeats' thoughts but also employs many poetic symbols to add to the artistic nature of the poem. The use of structure rhyme and poetic devices allows Yeats to clearly express the 'excess of love' within his poetry.

In 'the Wild Swans at Coole' Yeats describes and dwells on not only his love for the fifty-nine swans, but their obvious love for one another. In 'Easter 1916' Yeats discusses the 'excess of love' that 'bewildered' the rebels 'till they died'. 'A Prayer for My Daughter' focuses on Yeats' extreme love and anxiety for his daughter as she grows. Using descriptive imagery, a deliberate structure, a specific rhyme scheme and various poetic devices Yeats clearly transforms 'excess of love' into art in his poetry. The artistic qualities of his poems are obvious in the way they flow and can be understood and easily related to by the reader.

**Comment:**

This candidate demonstrates a sound knowledge of the three poems chosen for discussion and in general, the material is well organised and presented. When the candidate discusses how Yeats' poetry transforms excess of love into art, the analysis is satisfactory, but too often phrases such as 'an obvious artistic quality' or 'an artistic sense' are used unconvincingly. Detailed discussion of particular lines enables the candidate to demonstrate understanding of the poetry in a more impressive manner, particularly in the examination of 'Easter 1916'.

**Question 5 - The Study of the Sonnet**

*'The speaker of Shakespeare's sonnets is concerned above all to arrive at self-understanding.'*

*Discuss this view with reference to FOUR of the sonnets set for study.*

*William Shakespeare, The Sonnets*

*'When forty winters shall besiege thy brow' (2)*

*'When I do count the clock that tells the time' (12)*

*'When I consider every thing that grows' (15)*

*'Who will believe my verse in time to come,' (17)*

*'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? (18)*

*'Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws' (19)*

*'A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted' (20)*

*'Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed' (27)*

*'When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes' (29)*

*'If thou survive my well-contented day' (32)*

*'Full many a glorious morning have I seen' (33)*

*'Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore' (60)*

*'Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea' (65)*

*'That time of year thou mayst in me behold' (73)*

*'Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing' (87)*

*'They that have pow'r to hurt, and will do none' (94)*

*'When in the chronicle of wasted time' (106)*

*'Let me not to the marriage of true minds' (116)*

*'O thou my lovely boy, who in thy power' (126)*

*'Th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame' (129)*

*'My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun' (130)*

*'When my love swears that she is made of truth' (138)*

*'Two loves I have, of comfort and despair' (144)*

### **General Comments**

Many C range students struggled with this question which directed them away from the sonnet as artifice and towards some notion of autobiographical sequence. Students who challenged the question and used their knowledge of the sonnets to argue that their concern was not simply to arrive at self-understanding were rewarded for their intelligent discussion. Weaker students tended to use the concept of 'self' very loosely, attaching it inappropriately to whatever observations they were making. The selection of sonnets often revealed how well students knew the work: weaker students tending to stick within sonnets 1 to 29. A range of answers demonstrated an ability to discuss the ideas of the poems in connection with poetic technique while less able students exhibited a lack of awareness of convention and of the sonnet as artifice; very weak students merely paraphrased the poems.

### ***Excellent response (A Range)***

'Self-understanding' is certainly a key element for sonnet 73, however the speaker of Shakespeare's sonnets was created for dramatic purposes, as sonnets 12, 19 and 126 may show. The dramatic importance of the young man sequence is also a concern, but Shakespeare's speaker is above all concerned with the immortalisation of the young man. This development is evident through the language, imagery, structure and ideas of the four sonnets 12, 19, 73 and 126.

The narrator of the sonnets is constantly at war with Time, the all-powerful Destroyer. A sense of intense drama is created through the language and imagery of the sonnets: 'Time's scythe' from 12 and 'antique pen' (19), are Time's tools, the pen as equally deadly as an aging tool. The narrators purpose in sonnets 12 and 19 is to arrive at some sort of resolution which allows the young man to achieve immortality. For the farmer the advice is as follows:

'Save breed to brave him when he takes thee hence'. Thus it would seem the narrator's sole purpose is to save the 'lovely boy' from 'swift-footed Time' (19). In 19, however, the narration finds a more successful means of immortalisation: 'My love shall in my verse ever live young'. The intensity and ferocity of the onslaught as depicted in 19 is a contrast

to the beauty of sonnet 12. Language in 19 such as ‘blunt’, ‘burn’, ‘pluck’ and ‘devour’, is balanced by the softness of words such as: ‘trees’, ‘leaves’ and ‘canopy the herd’.

Sonnet 12 creates a sense of timeless beauty, and it is this essence of timelessness which is a small triumph over time.

Sonnet 19, however, aims to hammer Time down, with violence and mockery: ‘Do what e’er thou wilt....but I forbid thee one most heinous crime.’ It would appear in 19 that the narrator has triumphed over time, as the tone would suggest, and the immediacy of the images ‘pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger’s jaws’ inject authority into the sonnet.

The use of assonance in ‘keen teeth’ gives the line a sharp, deadly slant, as if time is walking a sharp knife blade that could do much damage if care is not taken.

Conversely, in sonnet 73 it would appear that the narrator is concerned with reaching some level of self understanding. This beautiful sonnet progresses through images of death, from autumn/winter in the first stanza, to ‘twilight’ in the second, and finally ‘glowing embers’. All are images for death, however, like Donne’s ‘A Valediction Forbidding Mourning’, only the last image is the more successful, just as the compass conceit rises above all others. Both winter and night can be counteracted by spring and dawn, themselves cycles of time and regrowth, however the blazing fire, once extinguished, will never burn again.

It is evident that the narrator has arrived at an understanding that Time and Death will eventually conquer, and has thus accepted the outcome. He welcomes death like he would the peace of sleep, ‘Death’s second self’, and acknowledges his achievement of immortalisation for the young man: ‘So long as man can breathe and eyes can see, / so long lives this, and this gives life to thee.’ The subtle mocking of Time through the words ‘so long’, is evident of victory, and acts as a final farewell to the young man.

The beauty of imagery in sonnet 73, ‘bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang’, prepares us for the malevolence of sonnet 126. As the final sonnet in the young man sequence, the drama of this sonnet contains all the elements of a highly dynamic plot or great tragedy. Sonnet 126 stands out because of its different structure. Shakespeare has modified his own sonnet structure, normally consisting of three ABAB rhyming stanzas and a couplet. As many of the other 125 young man sonnets aim at immortalization, the couplet seems to be the binding force for Shakespeare.

Strangely, sonnet 126 has twelve rather than the usual fourteen lines, with a formidable AABB rhyme, which pushes inexorably forward. The narrator, it would appear, has abandoned immortality; as the final couplet has always been worked towards, so 126 has no couplet. The ‘lovely boy’ is given no immortality, is left no advice by the narrator, and, it would seem, there is no resolution for either of them.

This is apparent with the transition of possession. The young man, who previously belonged to the narrator, has now been handed over to Nature. The repetition of ‘O thou’ signifies this change, the first ‘O thou’ acting as a sort of longing call to the ‘boy’, and by the second it becomes evident that Nature, ‘Sovereign mistress over wrack’ now possesses him. The downfall of the young man from ‘my love’ to ‘thou minion of her pleasure’ serves a dramatic purpose in the sequence, and the narrator only aims at enhancing the drama.



The absence of a final couplet in 126 leaves us longing, despairing for the young man. The final word 'thee' is like a warning to all who read the sonnet, that we all must answer 'Nature's audit'. Thus the speaker ceases to tell of the young man, having come to the acceptance of death and become victorious over time. The narration leaves the young man at the end of the sequence on a note of chilling finality.

Thus the speaker of Shakespeare's sonnets moves on to his mysterious Dark Lady. He has, in the process of battling against time, to 'save' (12) the young man's beauty, come to a self-understanding and acceptance of death. He has also triumphed over 'Devouring Time' (19) hence achieving his ultimate goal. And thus we are left with a compelling sequence of battle, self-understanding and triumph, from the hand of one of literature's greatest writers.

**Comment:**

This essay was distinguished by its ability to challenge the assumption of the question and argue that the sonnets are not primarily concerned with self-understanding. The argument that the 'speaker is above all concerned with the immortalisation of the young man' enabled the student to respond sensitively to the poems, without struggling to convert explorations of love, time, lust and the beloved into self-exploration.

The student demonstrated the ability to compare sonnets (eg 12 and 19) and to identify differences of perspective between them. In this way, the student was able to argue for some kind of development in the speaker within the sequence, while also recognising that the different opinions expressed may be due to changes of mood or situation. The student effectively incorporated discussion of language into the argument, mentioning the effect the sounds of words have on the meaning of one sonnet, and dealing competently with the impact of imagery in another. The discussion of the structure of Sonnet 126, with its unusual 12 lines, was particularly successful in demonstrating the connection between poetic technique and poetic ideas, arguing that the lack of a final couplet reflected the lack of resolution in the relationship between the speaker and the young man.

A discussion of one of the sonnets involving the Dark Lady would have given greater balance to the answer; nevertheless, the student's focus upon the young man provided a valid way of answering the question, since it asked about Shakespeare's main concerns in the sequence.

**Question 6 - Utopias and Anti-Utopias**

*Examine the view that 'Utopian and anti-Utopian fictions stretch the sense of the possible and challenge the plausible.'*

*In your answer, discuss Thomas More's Utopia and TWO of the other texts set for study:*

*Margaret Atwood, The Handmaid's Tale*

*William Gibson, Virtual Light*

*George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four*

## General Comments

Comparatively few scripts distinguished the ‘possible’ from the ‘plausible’ in the question, indeed many candidates appeared to be unaware of the meaning of ‘plausible’. The context in which these terms were used in the question (‘stretch the sense of the possible and challenge the plausible’) increased the complexity of the task facing candidates, many of whom spent a large proportion of their essay in coming to grips with the topic.

Despite this, the question elicited a range of responses. The instruction, to ‘Examine the view that...’ was in itself a discriminator; the better answers tended to provide a critical assessment of the question, while poorer ones provided examples of situations and events that seemed impossible from the three texts. The fact that candidates were asked to write on three texts proved difficult for many. Some responses discussed two texts only, while others wrote the majority of their answers on More’s *Utopia* and dealt with the other two in far less detail.

‘A’ range scripts engaged all parts of the question, distinguished between the possible and the plausible in the context of the quotation, provided a balanced, often integrated discussion of the three texts and detected the relevance of literary technique to the question. The very best of these responses were sophisticated in analysis, textual reference and writing style.

‘B’ range scripts demonstrated familiarity with the texts and the ability to make judgments about them. These were conscientious and thorough responses that may have not made precise links to the requirements of the question. At this level, as with the ‘A’ level scripts, there was a sense of real engagement with the texts.

‘C’ range scripts tended to exhibit a range of opinions, often unsubstantiated by evidence from the texts, about the nature of the possible. This often involved overly confident generalisation about the historical context in which an author wrote or in which a text was set. Responses in this range tended to be based in a thematic analysis at a simple level of interpretation. There was little awareness of technique.

### ***Excellent response (A Range)***

Utopian and Anti-Utopian fictions stretch the sense of the possible but in challenging the plausible clearly define that which is impossible. Both George Orwell in ‘Nineteen Eighty-Four’ and Margaret Atwood in ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ deliberately exaggerate negative aspects of their own societies, but by placing realistic individuals within these constructs, create realistic, and therefore potent, warnings. They stretch the sense of what is possible by making a fantastic situation seem plausible and realistic to the reader. Similarly Thomas More in ‘Utopia’ challenges what is seen as possible in the European society criticised in Book 1 by the improvements made on it in Book II. But the island of ‘Utopia’ and the impossibility of its existence, shown in More’s very choice of its name: it is both ‘happy place’ and ‘no place’, is shown clearly as More uses literary techniques to undercut and challenge its plausibility. All texts challenge the plausibility of the ideal, and while they do this they stretch the sense of the possible, the realistic, to warn against trends in their own society and criticise them.

‘Nineteen Eighty-Four’ and ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ may both at first seem worlds of extreme fantasy, but what makes these novels so frighteningly successful is the fact that

they are simply parts of the writer's contemporary society rearranged and extrapolated. This combined with the insertion of the realistic characters Offred and Winston Smith, draws the reader to realise the possibility of these actual outcomes. Thus, Orwell and Atwood both warn against the extremist oppression of totalitarian regimes and the danger of regarding them with complacency.

The world of 'Nineteen Eighty Four' is drab and bleak, but the technology is not startlingly different, the main innovation being the 'telescreen' and the characters frighteningly realistic. As readers see Winston, first described as being thirty-nine with a 'varicose ulcer above his right ankle', as a frail and insecure man. His rebellion is impossible, he knows this, but continues anyway, giving him at least some dignity, some individuality, in the eyes of the reader. The reader also understands the odd charisma of O'Brien who is both torturer and healer to Winston. With all else removed, family, language, love, warmth a reader is able to understand Winston's irrational faith in the only friendship even though it means the destruction of his reality.

Similarly, the society of Gilead is the logical step of the evangelical ideas of those like Serena Joy that we recognise in our own world. Such puritanical and oppressive ideas are present within our society and Atwood persuades us that it would only take a crisis to create such an oppressive society. The comparison of Gilead and the section of Historical notes emphasises the possibility of this situation. Again, as in Orwell's novel, the character of Offred, a realistic and 'average' human being placed in an extreme situation, aids Atwood's extension of what is seen as possible in the mind of the reader. Her pleading and her storytelling, her attempts to hold onto her sanity and individual ambiguity in a world that objectifies her as an object of fertility, 'I am a natural resource', defines her as a human being. The flashbacks to her past, and the final ambiguity of her future, 'And so I step up...', as expressed in her final comment, allow the audience to see the possibility of Gilead in their own societies.

In style and genre More's Utopia is different to the two very similar novels discussed above. More of a philosophical dialogue, 'Utopia' contains few, if any, real characters. But, although its effect lies mainly in the realm of challenging the plausibility of the ideal state, it also stretches the possibility of something better than the society in Book 1 through its criticism.

The society of Book 1, bearing a striking resemblance to More's own is criticised directly by Raphael Nonsense and satirically in Book II. Raphael describes with irony the 'several saintly abbots' that actively do society harm, and uses a rational approach to expose the greed, pride and stupidity that lie behind such ideas as the enclosure of land and conversion of arable land to pasture. It is logically impossible to criticise a society without supporting the idea of progress. The depth of More's criticism is emphasised by the satire of Book II. The amusingly named 'Flatulentine' diplomats are ridiculed in their finery by the Utopian populace who reject the scarcity value of gold and other similar metals. More ridicules the way his own society judged the scarcity value of gold and other similar metals. More ridicules the way his own society judged personal worth by material possessions. In a small way More stretches the sense of the possible by at least suggesting in his dialogue, that things may be improved.

The second concept present in all Utopian and Anti-Utopian fictions is that of the impossibility of the ideal civilization. Far more subtle in More's 'Utopia' it is nevertheless present in all three texts. They all define what is impossible, thus challenging what could be considered plausible and showing it clearly not so.

All texts show that a Utopian civilization for one person or point of view is dystopic for another. Due to the subjective nature of the concept and the individuality that exists in the human race, the ideal is impossible. In 'The Handmaid's Tale' the commander admits 'better never means better for everyone...', in 'Utopia' 'one man's medicine is another man's poison' and in 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' the party's Utopia of 'power for the sake of power' is achieved through the offering of the populace. It is clearly an idea that runs through all texts.

In creating obvious dystopias, oppressive, stifling and totalitarian societies, Atwood and Orwell demonstrate dramatically this idea, as well as having it explained by characters. In 'The Handmaid's Tale' we are aware of Offred's suffering, 'I can't go on like this', and the Commander's pride at what he has created and at showing off at Jezebels. O'Brien's descriptions of the motivations of the party and Winston's disbelief is ironic. Winston thinks the 'Animal Instinct' will ultimately destroy the party, but it is this which will keep it in control. This serves to heighten the drama of Winston's oppression for the benefit of the party. The two novels not only state, but prove conclusively to their readers that the ideal is not plausible because of both the nature of perfection and the nature of humanity.

More undercuts his narrator more subtly to show the impossibility of the island of Utopia. Along with the name itself, and the pun on 'no place' and 'happy place', Raphael is 'Raphael *Nonsenso*', his other examples are 'Tallstoria', 'Happiland', his friend is 'Tommy Rot' and many features of the Utopia island have similar names, such as the river 'No water'. More also uses a number of litotes, or complex double negatives, that bring into question his statements; comments such as the buildings were 'far from impressive' can suggest the opposite, undercutting the plausibility of the description.

Many aspects of the Utopian society can seem absurd, like the marriage customs 'The bride... was exhibited stark naked to the prospective bridegroom'. The techniques of war so applauded by Raphael in Book II are exactly the same as those he criticises in Book 1.

The very nature of man that is expressed by each section of 'Utopia' shows the impossibility of the ideal society. More's final comment that he 'should hardly expect' the good aspects of Utopian society introduced into Europe is the final statement of impossibility. More gives us the idea that no matter what the safeguards were, the society would still be successfully exploited by the rich and greedy criticised in Book 1. The deliberate conformity and unrealistic portrayal of the people of Utopia and their society 'once you had seen one you had seen them all' described in a mass of sweeping generalizations, serves to confirm the impossibility of such a society ever existing and questions its desirability even then.

Thus, clearly, each of the three texts also confirms the impossibility of the ideal state, challenging its plausibility. In the novels, this is through direct emotional appeal and in the dialogue 'Utopia' it is indicated to the audience by more intellectually aimed techniques.

Obviously then, the Utopian and Anti-Utopian fictions George Orwell's 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' Margaret Atwood's 'The Handmaid's Tale' and Thomas More's Utopia share common concepts, though in varying degrees and communicated through different means. They stretch the sense of the possible by creating imaginary societies as a reaction to their own societies, and they challenge the plausibility of the idea of the ideal society. Though the societies represented by Orwell and Atwood are implausible at first the possible is stretched to encompass them. In More's case what seems a plausible society at first is shown as an impossible and undesirable dream. All texts show the impossibility of perfect societies, challenging the reader's belief in the plausibility of perfection.

**Comment:**

This fluent and sophisticated response captures its argument succinctly in the opening sentence. The introduction goes on to cogently address all aspects of the question and clarify what the candidate sees as the common intent of the writers. The argument is thoughtfully and convincingly developed. The candidate confidently discusses three texts, integrating comparison of 'Nineteen Eighty Four' and 'The Handmaid's Tale' and identifying the contrasts in philosophy and style of the three authors. This is a mature and impressive examination response.

**Above Average response (B Range)**

Authors of the Utopian genre (whether Utopian or anti-Utopian) stretch the sense of possibility and, subsequently, the reader challenges the plausible in order to effectively create and sustain their worlds. More's 'Utopia' turns the seemingly possible world of Utopos into a nation devoid of humanity and challenges the realism of Nonsenso's tale. George Orwell's 1984 gives a certain realism to his Oceania, while, at the same time, demands that the reader challenges the plausibility of such a place. Atwood's 'The Handmaid's Tale' follows a similar pattern. By using this dichotomy, the author can portray their fictional society within the realms of imagination, the reader can then question the plausibility of such a creation and subsequently, this dichotomy causes a success in the Utopian and anti-Utopian genre.

'Utopia' begins with an unusually carefully constructed introduction consisting of a Utopian poem, a sample of the Utopian language and two letters sent and received by real people (although they are, of course, now long dead). This was an attempt by the author, Sir Thomas More, to create an illusion of reality so as to conceal his real intent. A reader of 'Utopia', particularly today, would find it hard to believe that the subsequently described nation could ever exist. Hence the careful construction of the novel is clearly a literary strategy to provoke exactly the opposite response. More attempts to make Utopos a real place. He attempts to stretch the possible in order to maintain a guise of fictional writing while all the while using his novel to criticise the society in which he lived.

More makes the possible impossible – he challenges the plausible. Nonsenso's description of Utopos in Book II of 'Utopia' begins in a rather straightforward and, consequently, credible manner. The geography, economy and general lifestyle of the island is detailed. Work habits, clothing and a system of communal ownership are expounded. Despite the lack of human individuality, Nonsenso's description is detailed enough to appear credible.

To make this seemingly possible island impossible, however, More adds unrealistic elements. The most obvious of these is that, although Nonsenso (Raphael) claims to have lived there for 'five years' no individual Utopian is described. Many of the Utopians ideological beliefs are also unrealistic. For one, this society is, despite all its appearance of equality, actually based on a class hierarchy. The 'intelligensia' hold positions of importance (eg Mayor, Bencheaters etc). 'Women are subordinate to their husbands' and the elderly are given higher status than the young (indicative in their meal time practices). Travel is restricted and, as Nonsenso informs More, 'everyone has his eye on you'. These imperfect qualities make the plausibility of Utopos being 'the one true Commonwealth' fictional and clearly challenges the plausibility of any such statement.

1984 is a detailed account of a world ruled by 'Big Brother' and his minions, the 'Thought Police' and the 'Inner Party'. Like Utopos, the citizens of Oceania are constantly watched by means of 'telescreens'. Orwell depicts this society in all its terrifying cruelty. 'Freedom is Slavery' and 'War is Peace' cry the party slogans. In a post World War II period, combined with the pathetic humanity of Winston Smith (the protagonist of the novel) this society gains an uneasy credibility. Images of the Nazi regime (1933 – 45) flicker to mind and there is little difficulty in stretching the possibilities of life to include an Oceania-like society.

Orwell rarely challenges the plausible in his text. The fact that it is so possible is what makes the novel so effective. It is the reader who challenges, or at least attempts to challenge, the plausibility of Oceania. The reader questions Winston's ability to see that 'two and two make five' or his love for Big Brother, 'he loved Big Brother'. The reader shudders at the thought of 'newspeak', Oceania's language which attempts to limit the range of thought, purely because the reader recognises the possibility or reality of such an occurrence. In this case, it is not the author who needs to challenge the plausible. 1984, a truly anti-Utopian novel, does not require this kind of challenge to achieve its aim. Rather, its success depends on the reader ultimately challenging the plausibility of the novel. Anti-Utopian fiction depends upon the ability to create a truly terrifying society which contains certain elements of plausibility.

Margaret Atwood's 'The Handmaid's Tale' also relies on making the society contained within it possible. The use of first person in the text, through the eyes of the unfortunate Offred and the allusions to both biblical and historical pretext effectively do this. Gilead is not much different from contemporary society. It is set in a recognisable part of the world (the USA) and the links between the pre-Gilead world (ie the society the author/Atwood actually lives in) and the world of Gilead are obvious. Whilst the possibility of Gilead existing, especially in the USA, today is rare, it is no enormous stretch of possibility to imagine one (although the stretch is there). In order to create her world, Atwood bases her novel in recognisable 'territory' and then adds elements like 'the eyes', 'the birthing stool' and 'the black van'. It is this stretch of possibility, coupled with Gilead's own elements which make The Handmaid's Tale such a realistic (and necessarily so) tale.

Once again it is the reader who challenges the plausibility of Gilead. For the author, this is not necessary. Atwood, like Orwell and More, even attempts to add to the realism of fictional Gilead by adding the post-Gilead lecture notes to the end of the novel. It is the reader who needs to challenge the plausibility of Gilead because it is, otherwise, too frighteningly possible. The turmoil of Offred and even that of Serena Joy, Nick and Glen

are so realistic in their description and the sense of isolation apparent, that the reader is compelled to challenge the ever increasing plausibility of Atwood's carefully constructed tale. Herein, again, lies the success of the novel. As the reader attempts to regain his/her equilibrium and to contain the fear struck into him by the cruelty of Serena Joy and the absolute hopelessness of those 'trapped' in Gilead, they are, in effect, attempting to challenge the obvious plausibility of Atwood's novel.

It can conclusively be seen that the author of a Utopian or anti-Utopian text needs to stretch the sense of the possible in order for their text to be effective. Atwood and Orwell do this most obviously, whilst More takes a slightly different approach more appropriate to his purpose and time of writing. It is the reader, however, who needs to challenge the plausibility of the novel, so carefully constructed by the author. This, in essence, is the gauge of the effectiveness of the novel. If, in the Utopian and anti-Utopian genre, the author makes the seemingly impossible possible and the reader then attempts to challenge this seeming possibility, then the success of the novel is complete.

***Comment:***

The student constructs a coherent and focused, if somewhat repetitive, argument around the notions of 'making the possible impossible', 'uneasy credibility' and 'the frighteningly possible'. Textual detail is well chosen, although not as wide ranging as would have been expected in an 'A' response. The student makes very good use of the role of the reader in the construction of the texts' significance. A strength of the essay is the student's individual response to the texts. The essay is sharper on *Utopia* than on the other two texts but it is well above average in terms of its engagement with the question.

***Average response (C Range)***

'Utopian and anti-Utopian fictions stretch the sense of the possible and challenge the plausible'. The aim of an author writing a Utopian or anti-Utopian novel is to present either a positive or negative vision of the future that could plausibly develop from our present society.

In Thomas More's 'Utopia' the author sets out to provide an ideallistic view of a foreign society. More's Utopians have apparently rid themselves of the worst flaw in human nature, greed. More began writing 'Utopia' with the vision of transforming his present-day England and Europe, but 'Utopia' quickly became a satirical criticism of England's policies during that period.

In Book Two of 'Utopia', More realises that his outspoken view of a better society for England has become criminally close to treason, and sets about ambiguously destroying his own views and moral ideas that he had expressed so strongly in Book One. There was however, some of More's ambiguity present before Book Two was written as is evident by the actual title of the book and the name of More's main advocate character for 'Utopia'.

'Utopia' actually comes from Greek and means (roughly) 'no place'. Therefore More was sarcastically promoting the existance of such a society from the beginning. The name 'Raphael Nonsenso' also suggests ambiguity and sarcasm, as it implies that Raphael's character makes no sense.

More's novel 'Utopia' seems to have been divided into two separate parts. In Book One, More strongly portrays his ideals and morals as true and just for all mankind. This is seen

as the utopian part of the book. Book Two, however, begins to mercilessly destroy More's ideals, systematically dismissing them as impossible and non-plausible. The novel 'Utopia' certainly does 'stretch the sense of the possible and challenge the plausible'.

'The Handmaid's Tale', written by an active feminist of her time Margaret Atwood, definitely stretches the possible whilst challenging the plausible. The purpose of the author is to present an image of a dystopian society as a chillingly real and plausible vision of the future of present day society.

In the republic of Gilead, a new order reigns. Parliament no longer exists and the backbone of Gilead's law comes from the old testament bible, which is adhered to in the most rigid manner, and manipulated to explain away the many atrocities committed by this oligarchical society.

Margaret Atwood's vision of the future is made even more chillingly possible by the fact that powerful religious fanatics have always been a substantial threat to modern society, and the sexist ideals to which they adhere have always been lurking in the shadows of the male soul.

'The Handmaid's Tale' is a harrowing story of sexism, fanaticism, and unbending rules and strictures. The novel is anti-Utopian and the hauntingly real possibility that this society may come to pass definitely 'stretches the sense of the possible and challenges the plausible'.

'Nineteen Eighty Four' written by George Orwell is another anti-Utopian novel. Orwell's purpose is to portray a chillingly possible and undesirable society that could plausibly be the future of present-day society. Orwell's vision of 'Nineteen Eighty Four' was a country or continent torn by war, and exploited by one group of powerful men, the oligarchy.

Orwell vividly portrays his dystopic society through the eyes of a malcontent, Winston Smith. Winston resents the way his society is run. There is a daily or weekly ration on everything from clothing to chocolate, and the items they are given are always poor quality, with the excuse that soldiers on the supposed front line required the better quality supplies.

'Nineteen Eighty Four' is an example of a society completely manipulated by war and suffering. Orwell managed to make his vision even more chillingly powerful than 'The Handmaid's Tale' due to the fact that during the time he wrote Nineteen Eighty Four a world war was actually going on.

The novel 'Nineteen Eighty Four' is dystopian, and Orwell makes it alarmingly more so by the complete failure of the novel's only hero, Winston Smith. 'Nineteen Eighty Four' does indeed 'stretch the sense of the possible and challenge the plausible'.

The purpose of Utopian and anti-Utopian literature is to present a future society that is either a desirable or undesirable possible outcome of present or modern-day society. A Utopian novel challenges the reader to attempt the change suggested, whereas an anti-Utopian novel challenges the reader to prevent or avoid the changes portrayed, thus successfully stretching the sense of the possible and challenging the plausible.



**Comment:**

This script demonstrated an inability on the part of the candidate to interpret the complexity of the topic. After the introductory paragraph, the three texts are discussed, with the only reference to the topic being the quoting of it to conclude each section of the essay.

The response abounds in imprecise generalisation and unsubstantiated assertion. Although the candidate is able to structure an essay and has a reasonable knowledge of the purpose of utopian and anti-utopian fiction as well as awareness of each text, the language used in the response is trite and repetitive.

**Question 7 - The Novel of Awakening**

*How effectively does the narrative method of Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre, Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea, and ONE of the other set texts lead us to the moment of awakening in these novels?*

*Kate Chopin, The Awakening*

*James Joyce, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

**General Comments**

This question was approached with confidence by candidates. Almost all dealt with the concept of awakening in the novels and a pleasing percentage discussed the roles of narrative method in the communication of the awakening. The evaluative ('How effectively..') component of the question was ignored in a large number of responses. The most able candidates had the knowledge and confidence to make sustained critical judgements, some of which were based on an acquaintance with reader response theory.

A disappointing aspect of the responses was the use of stock quotations. The best essays involved fresh and original insights and quotations or textural reference which had clearly been selected by the student to support his/her argument.

A disappointing aspect of the responses was the use of stock quotations. The best essays involved fresh and original insights and quotations or textural reference which had clearly been selected by the student to support their argument.

'A' range responses demonstrated awareness of the process aspect of the question ('...lead us to the moment of awakening'). They saw the connection between this process and the narrative method in the context of the question and the vary best established the critical parameters for their evaluation of effectiveness. These were fluent and articulate essays which recognised the intertextuality of *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* and did not limit 'narrative method' to narrative voice.

As with the 'A' range responses, the 'B' range included reference to imagery and structural features in the discussion of narrative method but often treated the process of awakening and narrative method as separate issues. A good knowledge of the texts and a sound attempt to engage with the question was evident in these responses but they lacked the complexity and depth of 'A' range answers.

The 'C' range responses often resorted to recount, with occasional links to the question. Some were very long but the depth of engagement with the question was not sufficient to

lift them into the 'B' range. At this level there is an over-reliance on preselected quotations, often with marginal relevance.

***Excellent response (A Range)***

The writers of 'Jane Eyre', 'Wide Sargasso Sea' and 'The Awakening' all make use of different narrative techniques in order to emphasise and express different aspects of their protagonists' awakening processes. Bronte makes use of a personal first person narrative, rich in imagery, through which we are able to understand Jane's journey toward moral and spiritual fulfilment. Rhys employs several narrative voices, and the structure of her novel evokes Antionette's descent into being controlled by patriarchy and her eventual awakening at the conclusion of the novel with her death. Chopin's use of the omniscient narrator in her novels is significant in that it emphasises the role of 'Fate' in Edna's awakening process and allows us to understand the dual nature of her awakening, which is to both her own personal identity and the boundaries of her society. Thus, each novelist has employed a different narrative style that effectively leads us to the moment of awakening of her female protagonist

Jane's narrative voice in 'Jane Eyre' is often retrospective and as such, we are able to have an adult perspective on her process of maturation that ultimately leads to her complete awakening to 'bliss' at Gateshead, the passion of Jane's language evokes the importance of her rejection of adult authority in standing up to Aunt Reed, as she states 'it was the hardest battle I had fought and the first victory I had gained.' Thus, because we are able to regard Jane's process of awakening from her mature-self's perspective, the significance of her moments of awakening is ostensibly deepened. In this manner, the childish passion that Jane exhibits at Gateshead is symbolic of her relatively unawakened self, and we are able to see this through her own personal narrative.

That Jane's narrative charts both her personal thoughts and her outer expressions of language is also of significance. In this the reader is able to see that Bronte's construction of the minor characters in her novel has been symbolic, and each plays a part in an important aspect of Jane's moral pilgrimage. This is clear in the symbolic imagery that Bronte's subjective narrator employs – referring to Mr. Brocklehurst as the 'black pillar' and St. John Rivers as the 'white stone' for example. Through the use of these usages we come to see that whilst the protagonists' descriptions of them are contrasting, each of these two men plays a vitally important role in Jane's awakening to self worth and her own morality and spirituality. It is her awakenings to these aspects of herself that ultimately leads Jane to her 'bliss' in love with Rochester, and thus we see that the narrative has been utilised by Bronte to symbolically lead the reader to that moment.

It is Jane's own narration regarding her relationship with Rochester that leads the reader to an understanding of both their characters and how they will ultimately find happiness together. The union imagery of which the narrative makes use at Thornfield, such as the ripping of the wedding veil in two and the splitting of the tree in half, symbolically portends the ultimate fate of Rochester and Jane's relationship. Thus, we are able to understand through Jane's own narrative that to find her 'moment of awakening' to ultimate happiness, she must first find a sense of her own personal worth. Her familial mother moon spirit urges her to 'flee temptation' and the 'temporary heaven' she would find in an immoral union. Thus, we see that in her discovery of her own self worth and

finding of independence at Moor House, Jane's narrative leads us to her ultimate moment of awakening, of 'liberty and triumph' as she becomes one with Rochester – 'bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh'.

Rhys makes use of quite a different narrative style in 'Wide Sargasso Sea' that serves to structurally symbolise Antoinette's plight and to lead us to her ultimate moment of awakening in her death. The narrative is structured in three separate parts – Antoinette's own voice narrating the First and Third (and a small section of the Second) and the man whom we presume to be Rochester (here after to be referred to as such) narrating the central section. This construction of the narrative symbolises Antoinette's life, and the progress of her rather ambiguous process of awakening. Antoinette's two sections are shorter than Rochester's, and act as 'book-ends' to the central male narrative, thereby symbolising the increasing patriarchal control of the female protagonist after her marriage. Also of significance is the link between the end of Part One, in which sister Marie Augustine states 'soon it will be morning', and Antoinette's opening words in Part Three in her chamber at Thornfield – 'in this room I awake early'. Thus, the narrative leads the reader to see Part Two as Antoinette's symbolic 'night' and period of darkness, which ultimately leads to the increasing fragmentation of her mind.

This fragmentation is evoked through the style of Antoinette's narrative, and the use of mirroring imagery which alerts us to Antoinette's fate. We come to see similarities between Antoinette and her mother – in their names, and descriptions of them both (such as the 'deep frown' they both possess that appears to have been 'cut by a knife'.) This use of predictive imagery in the narrative high lights the role of Fate in Antoinette's awakening – perhaps suggesting a predisposition to her descent into insanity, and the increasing fragmentation of her mind.

The differences between the views of Antoinette and her husband, depicted through their separate narrations, alert the reader to the fundamental differences between the female dominated world of the islands, and that of the more male-centred European work in which Antoinette's ultimate awakening occurs. It is Antoinette's death that is her ultimate 'moment of awakening' and the nature of her narrative at this point lends itself to this interpretation. The combination of European and Creole images such as the 'Miller's Daughter' in contrast to the flowers of the islands, and the racial reconciliation of Antoinette jumping into the metaphysical pool with her black alter ego, Tia, suggests a healing of the division evident throughout the novel's narrative. The image of the candle that 'burns up' to 'light (her) way along the dark passage' symbolises the moment of awakening for Antoinette, and the healing of her fragmented mind in death.

Chopin's novella makes use of a third style of narrative, however, this too is successful in evoking her heroine's awakening process, and leading the reader to her ultimate moment of awakening, which, once again, could possibly be seen to be her death. Chopin employs an omniscient authorial style of narrative through which to explore and depict Edna's journey. This style of narrative is significant, and suited to the style of Edna's experience as it allows the reader to understand the ambiguous nature of her awakening (perhaps most clearly visible in her death.)

The authorial narrative allows the reader to see the views of both the protagonist and the subsidiary characters of the work. In this manner, the writer is able to make clear

comments on the character of her protagonist, such as ‘in short, Edna Pontellier was not a mother-woman’. This also allows the writer to symbolically construct foil characters, who emphasise aspects of Edna’s character and externalise the existential dilemma that she faces. The characters used to this purpose are Mme Ratignolle, the conventional ‘mother woman’ who achieves the ‘fusion of two beings in her union with her husband, and the less conventional ‘artist woman’, M. Reisz. Edna’s essential awakening process can be seen to be her need to come to terms with to which role it is that she is suited. We are able to clearly see that the role of the mother and wife is one for which ‘Fate had not fitted her’. However at the same time, we see that Edna has not the ‘strong wings’ that would allow her to completely defy convention and become like Mme Reisz.

Thus, this narrative allows us to see that Edna must awaken not only to her own personal identity and what she deems to be ‘the essentials’, but also to the nature of the constraints that her society placed upon a woman such as her. The use of the sea as a recurring image in the narrative of the novel effectively symbolises the ambiguity of Edna’s awakening, and thus the ambiguous nature of her ultimate moment of awakening in her death. That the sea represents both the ‘abyss of solitude’ and a ‘soft close embrace’ is Chopin’s evocation of Edna’s plight. Thus we see that Fate has it that a woman such as Edna is unable to exist within the constraints of nineteenth-century society.

In this manner, the narrative that evokes Edna’s rather haphazard awakening to her own sensuality and capacity for personal expression, ultimately leads us to her movement of awakening – her death. Though the ‘bird with the broken wing’ alerts us to the negative nature of this, we can see this act as the protagonist’s claiming of what she deems to be the ‘essential’, and her awakening of her own refusal to sacrifice herself to the ‘hopeless and appalling ennui’ she finds within the limits of her society.

Thus, each writer makes use of a different technique of narration, in accordance with the nature of their protagonists’ awakenings. Each is able to use her narrative style to evoke an aspect of the female experience, to emphasise important moments in the journeys of these women and ultimately lead the reader to their ‘moment of awakening’.

***Comment:***

This is an absolutely outstanding response which is fluent, sophisticated and shows a very mature understanding of the texts and the way they are crafted. There is a detailed discussion of the narrative method of each text as well as some interesting comparison. The subtleties of the changes in style in evoking the moment of awakening are expressed in very clear language, supported by careful reference to each text.

***Excellent response (A Range)***

The intertextuality of Charlotte Brontë’s ‘Jane Eyre’ and Jean Rhys’ ‘Wide Sargossa Sea’ allows a dramatic comparison of the nature of the ‘awakenings’ portrayed by the authors. ‘Jane Eyre’ was created as a chronological vision of one woman’s struggle against the dominating 18<sup>th</sup> century patriarchy and the gradual awakening she experiences which allows her to define herself. Thus the awakening that Jane Eyre experiences can be directly linked by the reader to specific events in her life. Brontë has constructed this novel in such a way as to make her views clear, with the imposition of a meta-narrative on the story of Jane’s life. Jean Rhys, on the other hand, has taken a marginalised character out of this

novel and, in a post-modern revision, used it to create her own, dramatically different awakening. Rhys' narrative is fractured, a mixture of text and subtext that demonstrates Rhys' view that an individual may not be able to survive the onslaught of her identity when her new history is considered.

Different again is Kate Chopin's 'The Awakening', in which an ostensibly ordinary woman comes to a sensual and mythical awakening. Also told in a narrative chronology, 'The Awakening' provides a series of small events that trigger the larger awakening that of suicide. Through symbolism and imagery, Chopin makes it clear that her awakening is only positive if considered in a mythical light.

Chopin has used the narrative device of interweaving a mixture of reality and mythical symbolism to convey to the audience the full extent of the heroine, Edna Pontellier's, awakening. The novel tells the story of a woman who, having spent most of her life wearing a 'mask', has finally let her 'real self' come to the forefront of her consciousness. This seemingly unnameable transformation is clearly expressed by Chopin to be a spiritual one, beginning with the arousal of her spirit when hearing Mademoiselle Reisz's piano playing; 'the very emotions themselves smote her soul...she trembled.'

This awakens in the heroine a new awareness of herself; when she attempts that night to swim, successfully, it is described in terms of a sensual triumph 'with one or two long, smooth strokes she lifted her body to the surface of the water.' This momentary revival of spirit is dampened by her husband upon her return, when he says 'you didn't go out so very far.'

The chronological structure allows the reader to clearly see the connection between Edna's awakening and the effects it has on both her and her relationships with others. She becomes more alone, drawing into herself, realising the previous futility of her existence in a marriage 'with no trace of passion.' She rejects the role of mother and her wifely obligations, preferring to experience things for herself. This disturbs Leonie, and he exclaims 'we meet, if you understand, in the morning at the breakfast table.' He is dissatisfied with a seemingly inexplicable break in routine.

From the sensual, Chopin proceeds to demonstrate the sexual awakening her heroine 'experiences'. Her passion, 'stirred' and 'roused' by both Robert and Alcee Arobin, seems at first a welcome relief, then soon becomes burdensome. She realises that she must not fall into another infatuation, as with the tragedian, whose picture 'she kissed passionately'. The seeming freedom her sexual relationship with Arobin, however, is readily shown to be another lie, another seeming happiness, by Chopin. Chopin acknowledges that a woman's awakening from mundanity can take several forms, but shows us through the 'ennui' that pervades Edna's character that a full awakening cannot occur in a society that doesn't allow freedom of growth. Hence the mythical element. The heroine is perceived in the light of a newly born Aphrodite, arising from the sea. In this way, the narrative structure and the recurrence of symbolism allow the awakening to be seen as a positive light.

Though Edna has become the 'bird with a broken wing...reeling into the sea', her suicide is seen in a sympathetic light as a return to the embrace from whence the awakening began. Chopin clearly illustrates this with her repetition of 'the touch of the sea is gentle', almost verbatim.

Bronte created her novel 'Jane Eyre' in a time of Romanticism, when new philosophical ideas had expressed a belief that the individual is capable of controlling his or her own fate. This prevalent idea comes through clearly in her heroine's struggle from unwanted and unloved 'dependent' in her aunt's home, to her full realisation of self, her awakening, in which she can say with certainty 'I am Jane Eyre.'

The chronological nature of the novel enables Bronte to clearly demonstrate this progression, seen as a triumph against the patriarchy and societal convention. That Bronte was exploring radical ideas in her novel is certain – she expresses distaste for institutionalised religion in the form of Brocklehurst and St John, and deliberately creates her heroine of a low social order. This dramatic tale is made further dramatic by the pantheistic symbolism with which it is charged. The 'moon mother' features prominently, 'brightening momentarily' at occasions of dramatic and narrative significance'.

Bronte also imposes her own thoughts and opinions clearly in her frank addresses to the reader. These do not occur with regularity; but they, combined with the definite storytelling narrative style, convey a sense of deliberateness to the reader. Thus Bronte creates a meta-narrative to augment her tale of a 'governess, poor and plain', to make the novel into a moralistic tribute to the powers of the individual. Temptation besets Jane; the temptation to marry Rochester, the near-compulsion with which she regards marriage to St John. But ultimately, it is in Jane's self-assertion of her own destiny that allows her awakening to develop.

The symbolism employed by Bronte is wide ranging; she uses symbols to describe characters, calling St John 'a statue', 'cold as stone' 'marble'. This combined with the repeated 'blazing sun' imagery completely conveys to the reader the inhuman nature of St John, and his powerful dominance over Jane. Most dramatically, this combines with the repeated slave imagery to give the impression that Jane Eyre, the woman who desires to be self-assertive and self-defined, cannot help but to fall under partial sway of this 'cold man'.

The effect of the repeated slave imagery is to ally Jane Eyre continually throughout the novel with those enslaved and repressed peoples colonised countries. As such, the element of British imperialism is an inescapable element of this story, one that is given special importance in the likeness of Jane's enslavement and Bertha's 'prison' on the top of Thornfield. Even the dramatic cleaning scene, with 'such washing of paint, beating of carpets', cannot get rid of the stain that imperialism has left on English society. Its other effects can be seen in the distasteful characters of Mrs Reed and Blanche Ingram, both of whom are described as having 'dark' imperious' features. Thus the 'tent of Acham' to which Rochester refers is not only representative of Thornfield, but of the whole of English culture.

Thus Jane's awakening can be seen as a rejection of those aspects of society that would 'enslave' or colonise her right to independence. With the help of 'Providence', Bronte allows her heroine to succeed in her struggle against the confines of traditional English society.

In stark contrast to the triumphant ending of Bronte's novel, Rhys has created a juxtaposition that 'revises' the base text and gives it new meaning. This augmentation takes place in the character of 'Bertha', because 'Antoinette' in the novel, and the disastrous effects Rochester's 'colonisation' have on her search for identity. Through the

interweaving aspects of text and subtext, Rhys presents us with a fragmental vision of the degeneration of Antoinette through both her and Rochester's eyes. Thus Antoinette's 'awakening' can be seen as a negative regression into self, culminating, as in Chopin's 'The Awakening' the suicide of the heroine.

In the context of the emancipated West Indies, Antoinette struggles from the first to find adequate terms in which to define herself. Through lush description of the natural beauty of the garden and the islands themselves, Rhys draws a connection between the natural and the individual, intimating that Antoinette is 'a part of nature, and of her surroundings'. It is this aspect which Rochester is unable to cope with, as the English countryside, as seen in 'Jane Eyre', is not 'wild' but tame and nurturing: it is this lack of understanding of Antoinette and the honeymoon setting of Caranbois that leads Rochester to mentally torture his wife, so that she loses all semblance of sanity in a negative awakening.

Never having been properly prepared for life, Antoinette finds herself at a loss to deal with school at the convent Rhys is sharply critical of this ineffectual missionary style religion, a religion that has been superimposed on a society that it does not fit. This criticism is an echo of *Jane Eyre*, in which St John's evangelism is seen as all consuming and unhealthy. Learning about 'all the saints' and how to push the cuticles down; does nothing to develop Antoinette's sense of self, or for the possibility of marriage. Consequently, when she is married to Rochester and he turns against her, she has no defence. It is here that Rhys is critical of Bronte's indestructible heroine, demonstrating that without a clear sense of self it is impossible to withstand outside pressures.

The degeneration of the text with its fragmented structure and uncertain narrative voice, is Rhys' clear demonstration of the nature of Antoinette's 'awakening'. Tormented by Rochester's sexual inattention, upon which she has grown 'eager for' and dependent on, Antoinette turns further and further in on herself. Her final defeat is in Rochester's renaming of his – 'Bertha'. From now on she is his possession and her creation, with no identity of her own.

Narrative method and the authors' use of language provides a great understanding of the context of each awakening in 'Jane Eyre', 'Wide Sargasso Sea', and 'The Awakening'. In all three cases, the authors have augmented their texts with elements such as subtext, meta-narrative, or mythical imagery, to convey a clear sense of their own vision of awakening.

**Comment:**

This response is placed firmly at the top of the A range. The candidate exhibits the ability to construct a convincing and articulate critique under examination conditions.

The language of literary criticism is used with confidence and skill in the discussion of *Jane Eyre*, *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Awakening*. It is refreshing to read a script which exhibits a clear comprehension of the relationship between *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* instead of treating them in effect as unrelated texts.

The discussion of 'narrative method' encompasses narrative structure, intertextuality, narrative voice, symbolism and recurrent imagery. A high level of analysis is coupled with close reference to each text. The response is based on a full understanding of the requirements of the question and emerges as sophisticated, fluent critical discourse.

***Average response (C Range)***

The varied narrative methods of Bronte in 'Jane Eyre', Rhys in 'Wide Sargasso Sea' (WSS) and Chopin in 'The Awakening' all effectively lead us to the moment or moments of awakening for their protagonists in different ways. Bronte's method of having the protagonist, Jane, narrate in first person is effective in leading to the moment of awakening for her as the first person narrative still allows Bronte to direct the novel whilst having Jane speak personally. Rhys' more diverse method of having Antoinette speaking for the first and last parts of the novel interrupted in the second part by her husband gives us a double sided view of their situation, and allows Antoinette the control she seeks by being able to both commence and conclude her experience of awakening. Chopin's direction of the reader to Edna's moment of awakening is more analytical as she is speaking for Edna.

By giving Jane her own voice, Bronte effectively leads us to Jane's awakening by giving the story a more personal aspect. We, as readers feel more intimate with Jane and her awakening, giving us a stronger sense of the character and her experience. We are led through Jane's experience in a way that makes us feel as though we are experiencing it with her as it occurs. Bronte's narrative allows Jane to direct her own story and through this we are able to effectively follow her awakening through. Bronte's narrative allows Jane to take us through the events that lead to her first sense of awakening. Her abusive treatment received from John Reed during which he reminds her that she is 'a dependent' and did not have the right to use the Reed's library is recalled for the reader by Jane, making it more personal, and thus stronger. When Jane exclaims of the Reed children, 'They are not fit to associate with me!' we are more effectively shown her increasing awakening and independence, because Jane has expressed it herself as directed by Bronte.

Later, when Jane leads us to her complete moment of awakening as directed by Bronte, whereby Jane finds that she has acquired an independence, family, and is now equal with Rochester, it is most effective because the narrative has been first person, thus intensifying the experience of awakening. Jane has 'always wanted a family and connections' and has attained these things. She likens her experience to a chain that has thus been drawn out straight. She has become independent, making her more equal with her love, Rochester, 'I am an independent woman...and my own mistress.' Bronte's narrative proves effective in leading the reader to Jane's awakening as we, as readers feel we have been led to it by Jane herself. This intensifies the emotions experienced as we are more intimate with Jane and her story.

In 'Wide Sargasso Sea', Rhys' form of narrative is effective in leading us to the moment of Antoinette's awakening as we are led through the process both by Antoinette and her husband. In the first part Antoinette narrates as she is viewing her mother's increasing madness as she is at the same time growing up. We become familiar with Antoinette and her origins as she tells us, personally of her experiences of being different from those around her, like Tia, as the black people of the island revolt. She sees her mother's madness and a hint of what is to come for Antoinette is given as we see her mother pushing her away as though resigned to the fact that she will follow her mother's path.

Rhys' narrative is effective by revealing Antoinette's mother's marriage to an English Imperialist man and her subsequent madness through Antoinette's own eyes, and this shows up the way to Antoinette's moment of awakening.



Antoinette's actual destruction at the hands of her white husband is revealed through his narration of the second part of the novel. By doing this, Rhys gives the novel's narration a broader view by having another character narrate and thus it increases its effectiveness in leading us to Antoinette's awakening by showing her breakdown by her husband through whose actions she is going mad.

The third part of the novel is again narrated by Antoinette and this is effective as we are led personally to the moment of her awakening when she burns her husband's English house, the 'world of cardboard' and kills herself, 'I heard him calling Bertha! Bertha!' Her awakening is personally expressed as she states, 'I now know why I came here and what I have to do.' This moment of understanding is effective as Rhys has allowed Antoinette to lead up to it and reveal it herself.

The awakening of Edna in 'The Awakening' is a more analytical process as the story is narrated by Chopin entirely. Chopin's narrative is full of symbols as she leads up to Edna's awakening with a number of events. Firstly, Edna's independent swim during which she is filled with an exultant power, 'Why, it is so easy, a baby could do it.' This event sparks her awakening. Chopin then leads us through other events such as Edna's affair with Arobin which continues her awakening, 'there was a dull pang of regret...' Her affair that 'inflames' her and 'kindles desire' was not with the one she loves, Robert. Chopin's narrative is effective as she leads us through symbolic events to Edna's awakening herself. We are able to follow through to Edna's moment of awakening on the beach well, as we have been directed to look upon Edna analytically because it is not Edna who leads us, but Chopin.

The varied narratives used by the three authors, Bronte, Rhys and Chopin all are effective in leading us to the moment of awakening for their protagonists as they use differing methods to reveal the experiences. They are both intensely personal and analytical in their revelations.

***Comment:***

This response does address the question in its opening paragraph and demonstrates some recognition of the differences between the narrative methods employed by the three authors. This early recognition is only superficially developed in the text of the essay with a very general identification of a moment of awakening. Missing from the essay is any detailed exploration of the nature of such awakenings and how the writers have employed narrative to reveal the awakenings to the reader. The essay is reasonably fluent and sensible but rather brief in its treatment of each text and lacking in strong textual support.

***Below Average response (D Range)***

The authors of the novels of awakening, Charlotte Bronte, Jean Rhys and Kate Chopin, use different narrative techniques to express their character's comprehension and allow us to understand their goals, struggles and conclusions with a keener eye. Charlotte Bronte uses a first person narrative with the speaker describing her reflections of the past. This allows us to witness the heroine's reactions and examine the points made by the reminiscent narrator. Jean Rhys' novel is an attempt to justify the scapegoat of Jane Eyre. Since her work is created to halt this practice and encourage a greater understanding, she uses a first person double narrative to show the relativity of the forces at work on each character. By

allowing each character to interpret their surroundings and their natures, the reader gains a greater, more just, interpretation of events. Kate Chopin used a present tone and a third person narration for her book, so the reader's insight progresses at the same stride as the heroine's, and further interpretations must be derived from the interruptions of the omniscient narrator. Each author uses extensive symbolism and metaphors to assist the reader in grasping the more abstract aspects of their viewpoints.

'Jane Eyre' depicts the ideas of the author in the opening paragraph. Jane stands alone, but is miserably dependant on her cruel relations. Here Bronte shows us the unjust nature of the class system of her time, by creating a strong willed human being and showing her struggle, even as a child, to overcome her social barriers. We know she is strong because she is mentally mature for her age, realises the unjustness of her situation, and is searching for a place to belong. The weather is also seen as a symbolic representation of Jane's inner feelings. A winter snowstorm confines her to the house where she cannot escape the physical brutality of her cousin, John Reed. Bronte has now introduced another aspect that will continually oppress Jane, for she is in a fragile state as a woman in a fierce patriarch. The maid soon comments on her plainness, which is a further setback for the young girl. Jane lacks one of the most superficial, yet seemingly necessary qualities of her world and throughout her young life this lack of physical beauty will repeatedly be an unresolved issue. At Thornfield she paints a noble portrait of an imaginary Blanche Ingram, then roughly sketches a crude chalk drawing of her own face. She is well aware of her plain features, and uses this knowledge to push aside her romantic dreams.

The two narrators of 'Wide Sargasso Sea' experience very different conclusions and fates. Their intertwined conflicts and their contradictory progressions portray Rhys's theory that not all awakenings can be successfully achieved. The reader can notice abnormalities in Antoinette's childhood behavior that lead us to understand her destiny as the mad woman in the attic. Her repetition of words, 'marooned', 'marooned', her fragmented recollections, and the calm tone in which she tells key moments of the plot, like her mother's funeral, allow us to see the disturbances of her character, but also empathise her situation. Rhys never disguises the madness of her heroine, yet she does force the reader to strive for a happier, less isolated world where Antoinette might experience a different fate.

Edna begins her quest for satisfaction of the soul by undergoing unexplained emotional responses to her setting and oppressive factors. The drowsy, depressing effect these factors have on her are compared to the deep stirrings of freedom she feels when swimming or crying openly to the piano music of Mademoiselle Reisz. Her quest begins and ends in the sea, a place distanced from patriarchal society, that 'invites the soul to wander in its abysses of solitude.' Edna has been accepted throughout life by her society, so it is not until middle age that she begins to feel the weight of her position, unlike the other heroines.

***Comment:***

While the opening paragraph of this response sets up an articulate and thoughtful approach to the question, the essay itself unfortunately addresses neither the moments of awakening nor develops in any detail the earlier references to narrative method. This is a very brief treatment of each text with a tendency to retell the plot. It would appear that this student mismanaged their time.

### Question 8 - Modern Prose

*Examine the view that 'Nothing emerges more clearly from these examples of modern prose than the solitariness of the individual.'*

*In your answer, refer to THREE of the texts set for study.*

*Karen Blixen, Out of Africa*

*Jung Chang, Wild Swans*

*Robert Dessaix, Night letters*

*Patrick White, Flaws in the Glass*

*Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own.*

### General Comments

This question was accessible to all candidates, the most able of whom succeeded in examining aspects of the notion of solitariness as applied to the texts. More successful candidates were able to establish that solitariness can be a positive influence in the life of an individual with a sense of their identity.

*Night Letters* and *Flaws in the Glass* were examined well; more perceptive responses evinced a real understanding of the sense of each author's isolation in contemporary Australian society. The epic nature of *Wild Swans* proved a hurdle to all but the top range of candidates, many of whom were successful in discussing the political isolation which is so significant in the text. *Out of Africa* elicited a real sense of Blixen's connection with the landscape. Numerous candidates in the top range were able to see the smallness of the individual against the grandeur of the environment.

In general terms the number of 'A' range responses was disappointing. Some otherwise good responses were plagued by echoes of past questions. Candidates who had prepared, or discussed, two texts only were severely handicapped. A disturbing number of candidates referred to these texts as 'novels'.

'A' range responses exhibited familiarity with the language of literary critique, analytical skills of a high order, fluency and facility in integrating structural and stylistic features of each text into discussion. They kept the demands of the question clearly in view.

'B' range responses demonstrated an honest attempt to engage with the question, thorough preparation, and the knowledge that there is a need to refer to technique at 3 unit level.

Responses in the 'C' range were characterised by much recounting of events. Occasionally this recounting followed an introductory paragraph that showed some engagement with the question. The less confident tended to equate 'the solitariness of the individual' with solitude or loneliness. There was an over-reliance on stock quotations.

### ***Above Average response (B Range)***

The solitariness of the individual is a theme explored throughout the modern prose novels set for study. This theme is however applicable to these novels in contrasting ways. The texts 'Out of Africa', 'Wild Swans' and 'A Room of One's Own' each explore a female perspective of an unknown and unfamiliar world. The novels each invite the reader to

experience the solitary nature of the individual while also understanding how an individual is to cope with the world they are faced with.

'Wild Swans' is a work that explores one woman's quest for truth amongst propaganda and deceit. The solitariness of the individual is prevalent in this novel as Jung Chang questions the parameters set for her people at a time of political and social upheaval in China. Jung Chang finally comes to the realization that Mao Tse Tung's orders and punishments came from a disorganised and inexperienced ruling clan.

Jung Chang, blessed with intellect, is forced to conform to a society that is forever changing its standards of social acceptance. The individuality that Jung Chang possesses is hidden for the majority of her life because it is a crime to dare to go against anything that is written in Mao's red book. Chang is one person that, nearing the end of her time in China, allows herself to question the motives and actions of the Communist Party. Chang, although not a member of the Communist Party, was forced to adore and admire Mao as a deity, someone that would save her from the 'capitalist roaders'. However, the trouble that Chang came across was that a person such as her father, while towing the party line, was respected and lauded as a great man. Yet when he too tried to question the morality and motives behind many of the activities of the Cultural Revolution, he was deemed unworthy and forced to endure denunciation meetings. The once brilliant soldier of Mao, became an isolated man who wept as he was forced to burn his remaining shred of individuality, his books.

Incidences such as this highlight in 'Wild Swans' the notion that in Communist China, an individual is an enemy to communism. The people of China are told that the state comes before the individual, therefore the selflessness that these people possess goes to extraordinary lengths. An example of this is Chang's brother who, when striving to climb the Party ladder is forced to do hard labour at an exhausting level so that he can be deemed worthy of a promotion. There is no individual nature of self respect, as he strives to work harder, because it is under the orders of Mao.

The Solitariness of the individual is clearly defined in 'Wild Swans' as Chang is instantly criticised for her intellect. She comes under much suspicion when she reads foreign papers or magazines. Chang feels an obvious intellectual status as she can see through the brain washing edicts of a tyrannical leader. This intellectual isolation is enhanced by her journey to England, it is only here that Chang is able to appreciate the fact that through her intellectual solitariness she was able to earn a position out of Communist Union. The solitariness of the individual is explored thoroughly and clearly in 'Wild Swans' as the reader becomes aware of the situations that Chang endures when she becomes enlightened as to the failing of Communists.

'A Room of Ones Own' is an essay that explores the isolation felt by women who possess the talent to write for a living. Virginia Woolf tells the audience that for a woman to write, she needs five hundred dollars and a room to herself. We can see the solitary nature of the individual here as Woolf continually stresses that for a woman to write well she must be free of any 'impediments'. The impediments being the failure to write in an androgynous nature and the constraints placed upon women in society.

The solitariness of the individual is expressed in 'A Room of Ones Own' in that Wolf tells her audience that for many years, many centuries a woman would not possess enough

talent to write for a living. The fictitious example of Judith Shakespeare is presented, although it is in reality true enough. A woman would have been driven crazy by her talent and would have become a half wit, half wizard creature doomed by suicide. The underlying message from this story is that women could not display their talent as they were isolated and were merely 'the property of their husbands'.

'A Room of Ones Own' continues to show that women now, in Woolf's time, are still isolated and live a solitary existence if they possess artistic talent. The example of this is the lack of facilities given to women at Fernham College, yet the men at Oxford have 'unending streams of silver and gold'. The imminent 'purity of her sex' leads Woolf to come to a conclusion that an individual woman who has artistic talent is deprived of a worthwhile chance to flaunt her work. The solitariness of the individual is prevalent in that Woolf demonstrates a woman can not even enter a library at a male college without 'a letter of invitation' or male company. This repression leads Woolf to believe her sex has for many years lived only for the servitude of men and to be a 'looking glass' that reflects to a man back 'twice the natural size of his figure'.

Those doomed by talent have had to hide their passion for fear of reproof and mocking. This is why, Woolf tells us, women were forced to write under male pseudonym. The individual talent was thwarted by a male society that saw women as second class citizens. The solitariness of the individual is explored in 'A Room of Ones Own' in relation to a female view of literary experiences. Woolf concludes that above all it is 'better to be yourself than anything else' and from this the reader can see that despite years of struggle the female writer has lived in isolation and solitude.

'Out of Africa' is a perfect example of a solitary person in an unfamiliar situation. Karen Blixen in her prose pastoral, reflects on her time spent in Kenya on her coffee farm. The solitary nature of the individual in this novel comes from the fact that although Blixen was surrounded by friends and workers, she was initially alone and struggled within herself. Blixen was an individual amongst people of a different race, religion and social status and although she came to an acceptance of these people, she still remained an individual.

The solitude that Blixen found in Kenya initially emanated from the fact that she was from Denmark and her workers were Kenyan. The language barrier was an immediate barrier, but the ultimate barrier between her and the natives was their way of thinking. Blixen could never completely understand the natives' notion of Pride and God. This was to leave her in solitude for the length of her stay.

The foreign nature of the novel comes from the fact that Blixen was still a person who needed civilisation in her life. Although Blixen came to an understanding of nature and how the world of man and nature can occur, she never released her civilised roots. This too was a reason that Blixen remained an individual and was isolated from the Masai and Somali tribes. However, Blixen immediately felt connected to her surroundings. 'Here I am, Where I ought to be'.

However, the love of the land was fought with constant struggles for acceptance by the people and by the land. The solitariness of the individual is constantly expressed as Blixen comes to terms with her own existence by herself and relies upon herself in times of struggle. An example of this is when Denys Finch Hatton dies. Blixen is overcome with sadness at the thought of her friend's death and she must come to terms within herself.

Unfortunately this incident was one of many that was to dampen Blixen's memories of Kenya.

The solitariness of the individual is clearly expressed as the reader becomes aware of Blixen's struggle for acceptance and the struggle to succeed in a harsh environment. A feeling of empathy is created for the reader as we enter the African world that Blixen lives in. The reader is taken on a journey and the fall that Blixen experiences at the end of the novel as she is forced to sell her farm and leave her loved ones behind, is felt by the reader. The reader also recognises the pain that Blixen feels as she is isolated from the world in which the natives live in. Blixen is an inspirational woman, as she accepts her differences and her individually.

The modern prose texts illustrate the solitariness of individuality as the reader is able to comprehend the way in which individuals, because of their talents or differences, are forced to live in a world isolated from a conformist or merely different society that cannot accept them.

**Comment:**

This is a strong response at the top of the B range. In examining the solitariness of the authors of *Wild Swans*, *A Room of One's Own* and *Out of Africa*, the candidate has discussed the ways in which particular societies make demands on the individual. It is recognised that solitariness may take different forms, geographical, cultural, political and intellectual and that solitariness can apply to characters other than the author.

The response is well balanced and coherently structured, though the challenge of comparing texts and integrating textual discussion is not taken up except in the introductory paragraph. Although fluently written and exhibiting thorough knowledge of each text, the essay does not analyse technique at any depth. Characters and theme are discussed confidently in terms of the question but not the means by which they are developed.

**Average response (C Range)**

Modern Prose is concerned with finding meaning from universal experiences. Through retelling their stories Jung Chang, Karen Blixen, and Virginia Woolf are able to recreate experience, extract meaning and reflect the solitariness of their existence.

Karen Blixen in 'Out of Africa' presents a seemingly fragmented piece of work. However, these 'fragments' are put together in such a way that creates incredible meaning from her life, and centralises her thesis that nobility can be found.

Blixen makes frequent reference within her text of height and altitude. Much of her experiences take place on her farm which was high in the Ngong Hills at an 'altitude of over six thousand feet'. She felt elevated here as if she was 'near to the sun', giving her and her experiences a sense of superiority and nobility.

From Finch-Hatton's grave high in the hilltops, which had appeared to her suddenly out of the mist as if a 'curtain' had been lifted, Blixen could see north, south, east and west. She could even pinpoint her own seemingly solitary place in all this, 'My farm in its cleared place in the forest'. Although from a clearly different culture Blixen recognises her place here.

Having experienced so much in Africa Blixen feels that it would be impossible for her to move away and that it was 'the country which was slowly and gravely withdrawing from her'. Blixen watches the Africa that she admired slowly change, claiming that 'it was an Africa which no longer existed.' In her last year on the farm Lulu no longer comes to visit her and she believes 'Lulu has probably died a long time ago'. Kamante sadly does not forget Blixen but the people of Africa have no western voice and what messages Blixen does receive are distorted by his lack of knowledge and come to Blixen as 'inarticulate pleas'. Blixen feels that 'when Berkeley died; Africa changed'. The country she knew so well has ceased to exist and the nobility she came to recognise was slowly fading, exposing only the solitariness of herself.

Jung Chang in 'Wild Swans' retells the story of her life and her families within the historical movement of China. Faced by such pain and suffering many would have found it difficult to survive, but Jung Chang has the inner strength needed to carry on.

Jung Chang's grandmother, Yu Fang, suffered greatly under her concubinage to General Xue. It was her 'duty to wait until he returned.' And Yu Fang waited six years for her 'master' to return. She lived in fear of upsetting the servants or other concubines in case they took stories of her to General Xue.

With the potential love she had to give to her daughter De Hong, Yu Fang had the courage within herself to defy tradition and escape her life with the General. Yu Fang was 'extatic at having a child' and her life had a purpose. The love she felt and received from De Hong and Dr Zia, was enough to give Yu Fang the solitary strength to live on.

Through her own memories and stories from her mother Jung Chang is able to see that her father, Chang, was a 'moral man living in a world void of morals'. Chang gave his whole being to the 'party', and was betrayed, left as a broken man. Jung Chang witnesses her father burning his books as he is attacked by fervent red guards as a 'capitalist roader'. Jung Chang recalls it to be 'wild, agonised and broken' and that his tears are 'those of one not used to shedding tears'. Jung Chang is able to follow her father's unfortunate path to disillusionment and watches as he gives up on himself, and loses the physical strength to survive.

Jung Chang herself gives up her childhood and adolescence for Mao's Communist Revolution, claiming that that was her 'life's purpose'. Jung Chang has the human spirit to survive within her, and follows her own path from dedicated party member to a cynic who was 'ready to embrace the world'. Jung Chang makes the pilgrimage to see Mao as a young red guard. Missing him Jung Chang believes 'my life has no purpose' and even considers suicide. She has the solitary strength within herself to overcome this, and begins to doubt Mao and the party.

In Virginia Woolf's polemic 'A Room of One's Own', she condemns and criticises the oppression of females. Virginia Woolf's central concern is, what is it that is within the individual that allows them to create literary works of art.

Woolf argues that one element that effects an individual's ability to be artistic is an 'androgynous mind'. Through allusions to Coleridge's argument that 'a great mind is androgynous', Woolf comes to the belief that a truly artistic individual writes as neither a male or female. Woolf introduces the hypothetical Judith Shakespeare to illustrate this

idea. William Shakespeare as a child would have been educated in 'latin...and elements of grammar and logic', whereas his hypothetical sister Judith would not have been. Shakespeare was also given the opportunity to travel and marry young, giving him the experience necessary to be a talented writer. It was Shakespeare's 'naturally creative, incandescent, and undivided' mind which allowed him to produce such masterpieces. Judith on the other hand would most likely not have been given the same chances and opportunities as William. Woolf concludes uncompromisingly that 'it would have been impossible, completely and entirely for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare'.

Woolf introduces the fictional character Mary Carmichael to express that it is not impossible for women to create art in the present of 1928. However, women have been seen as inferior to men for so long that they have no tradition to base their works and talent on. Mary Carmichael's, or any other female's for that matter, mind is more than likely so imprisoned with resentment for men that they will not be able to produce anything to compare with men.

Woolf stresses that an individual has to create for themselves, and for as long as women concede they are inferior to men, or even superior for that matter, they will not be able to reach their artistic potential.

Modern Prose, by recreating existence and finding meaning in life, allows the solitariness of the individual to emerge, and be understood by the reader.

**Comment:**

This 'C' range script is coherent but lacks real engagement with the question. The candidate has some knowledge of the texts but has been unable to form a response that reaches beyond a general and superficial level. Selective recounting is employed heavily in the body of the essay. The topic is referred to in the introductory and concluding paragraphs but in the rest there is little more than reference to the 'solitariness of herself' in *Out of Africa* and 'solitary strength' in *Wild Swans*.

The ideas are sound enough; the essential problem is that much of the response, including most of the material on *A Room of One's Own* is peripheral to the question.

**Question 9 - Australian English**

*Discuss the view that 'The richness of Australian English is of more importance to us than correctness.'*

**General Comments**

Once again very few candidates attempted this elective. Those who did were generally well equipped to discuss the richness of Australian English, particularly colloquialisms. More able candidates engaged with the notion of correctness rather than simply taking it for granted. Most candidates related their observations to the historical development of Australian English in a convincing way.

**Above Average response (B Range)**

Australian English is a term used to describe the Australian diversification of standard English, stemming largely from British English. The most distinctive feature of Australian



English is its homogenous nature; contributing to its unique nature are also elements such as the adoption, adaptation and popularisation of terms; the construction of diminutives, the use of slang, such as strine; economy of language, 'Australianisms' and a certain measure of vulgarity. These elements combine to form a dialect unlike any other, that is representative of its Australian society and egalitarian way of life. Also contributing to Australia's unique dialect is the way in which it evolved. Australian English is then, caught up with the richness it possesses and '...is of more importance to us than correctness.'

The homogenous nature of Australian English is its most distinctive feature. It is the result of the uniform use of the elements of Australian English and reflects Australia's egalitarian way of life. The idea that the dialect is homogenous throughout Australia reflects the acceptance it has found. Regardless of its dissimilarity to standard or British English, Australian English has become the dominant dialect among Australians. Easleyon comments 'Homogeneity is one of the truly remarkable things about Australian English.'

Of specific interest in the study of Australian English is its adoption, adaptation and popularisation of terms. Relating to Australia's short but rich history. This element is recognised as intrinsic to Australian English.

From the lower class convict majority of the penal colony in 1788, through to the modernist period's flood of Americanisms Australian English has formed from a mixture of backgrounds and influences, promoting the adoption of terms and phrases. The convicts of the penal colony brought with them a broad or low dialect of British English, dispersed by a minority of cultivated backgrounds. Hence, the language that was originally established in Australia at settlement was raw and unrefined. Settlers at a loss for words to describe their new surroundings were forced to adapt existing words to their relevant applications in Australia. As a result, terms such as 'station horse' were adopted and adapted to 'stock horse' or 'bush horse'. These terms pertained to the new environment and were found to be highly appropriate as they were popularised by the colony. Hence, Australia's fascinating origins reveal some of the richness that describes the dialect that resulted.

Also demonstrating the element of adoption, adaptation and popularisation are the contributions of Aboriginals and immigrants to the unique dialect. Native Aboriginals had established terms to describe their surroundings (predominantly flora and fauna) for which the settlers could find no substitute. Hence words such as 'koala' and 'boomerang' were adopted, since becoming well recognised as Australianisms due to popularisation.

The immigrants that arrived during the Gold rush period brought with them new terminology and customs that impacted on the nature of Australian English. The European term 'bush', pertaining to woods or a forest was adopted and adapted to suit the Australian condition, and was popularised as demonstrated by Lawson's use of the term in his poetry to describe a treeless, desolate area.

Through the infusion of cultures and languages, a raw dialect evolved that was to become standard during the nationalist period. This infusion is demonstrative of the richness of Australia's history and the history of its homogeneous dialect.

Since the construction of a colloquial vocabulary in Australia, it has concerned itself with the preservation of such a dialect, aware of its diversity from standard of British English,

but embracing its richness. In addition to the ‘mixing pot’ of backgrounds, the Australian population also founded elements that facilitated this diversity by way of techniques such as the construction of diminutives. This is a process that involves the adding of ‘ie’, ‘o’ or ‘y’ to the end of a word. ‘Diminutives are all supposed to be affectionate’ and demonstrate the transition of Australia from a convict colony, to a multicultural society unified by language. Demonstrated in the Australian drama, ‘Puberty Blues’, diminutives enable a brick layer to become a ‘brickie’, endearing and affectionate in nature.

Australia is widely recognised for its use of slang and in particular, strine. This recognition reinforces Australia’s willingness to accept its diversity from Britain and demonstrate that ‘correctness’ is not necessarily a priority among Australians, with reference to the speech.

‘Strine is essentially a caricature of speech processes – dropping of letters, the running on of words together and so on – that is characteristic of spontaneous, informal speech.’ Demonstrated in Australian drama, Strine is an element of Australian English that disregards ‘correctness’ and embraces the richness of diversity. ‘Migod’ (Don’s Party) is an example of such incorrectness. Spelt phonetically, this term accentuates not only the written dialect, but also the speech of such English.

A technique harboured by most Australians is the ability to economise their speech by manipulating their language. ‘Australian laziness is demonstrated by the dropping of letters from the end (or beginning) of a word, sometimes an entire word will be eliminated in the pursuit of vocal economy.’ Hence the language of Australia comes to represent its people and their way of life.

Australia’s dislike of authority, trust in ‘mateship’ and disregard for correctness has also resulted in terms recognised world wide as unique to Australia, and the measure of vulgarity that shares such recognition.

Australianisms are terms unique to Australia or terms that have unique applications in Australia, and are understood by most Australians. ‘Mate...is a term... [that] has overtones not used elsewhere.’ As an Australianism, ‘mate’ refers to a friend or colleague, but has been popularised so that it is acceptable to refer to a stranger or even enemy as ‘mate.’ Such wide usage of the term reflects the ‘mateship’ that exists in Australia, relating to the pride Australians demonstrate in their richness.

Vulgarity is an element of Australian English that makes it highly unique. Desensitisation of the community to specific words has resulted in free-flowing vulgarity. Such a feature adds colour and flamboyance to the overall presentation of speech. ‘Sometimes there is a particular nuance in Australia. Bastard is an affectionate term that even when used offensively need have no implication of illegitimacy.’ Bastard is a term that exemplifies Australia’s desensitising to vulgar words, as it has been accepted widely to the point where it may be used as a term of endearment. Also pertaining to vulgarity is the widely used term ‘shit’. It experienced a downfall as an expletive after its extensive use in the 1970’s, and became acceptable as a term to describe many things (in particular, drugs), as demonstrated in ‘Don’s Party’ in which ‘good shit’ is referred to.

Each of these elements contribute to the unique nature of Australian English, demonstrating its richness and highlighting Australia’s disregard for ‘correctness’.

Australian English is a diversification from standard English, linked primarily to British English. Due to Australia's multicultural history a dialect developed unlike any other, possessing unique qualities and demonstrating uniformity through its homogeneous nature. It is apparent that the unique nature and 'richness of Australian English is of more importance to us than correctness.'

***Comment:***

This is a fluent, well-structured response that is based on a clear view of what constitutes 'richness' in Australian English. Statements are supported by examples drawn from film and drama.

Although reference to the 'correctness' aspect of the question is not highly developed, in its discussion of the richness of Australian English, the response deals with historical and contemporary factors and contains some valid generalisations about the language, as well as specific examples. More than any other factor it is this breadth of awareness which places the response in the 'B' range.