



2014

Literature GA 3: Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding errors resulting in a total less than 100 per cent.

Most students understood the task well and were able to meet the criteria for assessment at various levels of competence. The most successful responses showed good control of language. These responses were characterised by the ability to use a wide and sophisticated vocabulary and to tackle complex ideas. The students moved confidently within and between the passages and into discussion of the text as a whole, and showed a thorough knowledge of the text. The analysis of views and values was developed from the passages and was integral to the discussion. Responses showed an awareness of how the text functioned as a carefully constructed representation of the world, designed to elicit reader involvement. They showed a lively engagement with the text and often the reader/assessor was aware of a strong and confident personal voice in the writing. Students demonstrated the ability to work closely with the passages and to analyse and explore the language.

The following are paragraphs from student responses in the very high and high range that demonstrate many of these abilities.

The idea of being constrained to something as artificial as a typewriter is explored in 'Twenty-one Love Poems: V,' where poetry, language and linguistic freedom is overlooked within the fixed, rigid landscape of masculine discourse. The sharp 't' and the cracking 'k' of 'apartment', 'books', 'crack', 'thick jaws', as well as the elongated vowels of 'books', the swollen syllables of 'bulging eyes' worming their way into the readers mouth speak to the bestial imagery, the aggressive undertones of 'monsters' clawing their way into the speaker's realm.

Rich's choice to 'take the terms or leave them' must be informed not by this fear of retribution, but by an understanding of 'history'. Her double use of the verb 'stand' in 'poetry never stood a chance/ of standing outside history' underscores the deceptive means by which language can be manipulated to distort meaning or intent, and that the 'history' of the appropriation can only be combated by 'words' from those with 'verbal privilege'.

Rochester's condescending metaphor of Jane as a mere 'frantic bird', rather than a perceptive and heroic rebel, is physically and verbally denied by Jane as she uses measured language to undermine his proposition that she is frantic, indicated by her relatively short clauses. This mirrors her measured and self focussed words as a 'free human being' with an 'independent will'..... Bronte builds suspense through Jane's continual frustration as to what she perceives as Rochester's decision to marry Blanche.

Bronte describes Jane at the window looking out, seeing the remote blue peaks and the boundary of rock and heath which seemed a prison ground. This reveals a sense of the oppression felt by Jane. Through the description of the 'two wings of the building', and the 'skirts of Lowood', Jane endows the institution with a female character to express her own desperation. While Lowood may possess wings, it is confining and restricted, so too Jane shows her longing for freedom, but inability to escape. The fragmentation of 'school-rules, school- duties, school habits and notions, and voices, and faces, and phrases and costumes, and preferences', while fluid and rhythmic, is broken with commas and is repetitive, to convey the monotonous and weary tone and exemplify how suffocating such an experience is for Jane.

In 'The World' Rossetti explores the obvious temptations of the world around us. She writes of a world that 'woos [her] to the outer air', and uses the gentle, romantic description of the day as 'soft, exceeding fair' to remind her readers of the comforting and almost seductive appearance of the world; this imagery is furthered in 'L.E.L' where Rossetti writes of rivulets 'golden in the sun' and budding lilies. However, Rossetti quickly shows us the true nature of the world as she posits that this facade is a 'lie' and offers readers a glimpse of the 'naked horror of the truth'; the alliteration of the world's 'loathsome leprosy' gives the poem a sound that must be almost spat out, while the less concrete 's' sound of the 'subtle serpents' gives the line a very uneasy tone.

The grand, almost god-like nature of Antony is revealed through Cleopatra's lamentation. She extols the richness of Antony's character, greater than the physical wealth of 'crowns and coronets' which is mere 'beggary' in comparison. Her imaginative vision and the grandiloquence of her language is a major factor which shows Antony to be a human capable of greatness as well as mistakes, such as those shown in Passage 2.



Antony's willingness to seek peace with Caesar at the expense of the suffering Octavia is revealed through the stage direction [she weeps]. Foreshadowing the abandonment and suffering that will follow from Antony's loveless union, the audience is called to question Antony's morality in terms of love, but, to a greater extent, that of Caesar.

Responses in the medium range sometimes relied heavily on the biographical details of the author rather than focusing on the analysis of the passages. Responses to poetry were often overly concerned with the technical characteristics of the poems but were not always clearly supported with evidence of understanding of the poet's concerns and why, and with what effect, these techniques were used. Such responses usually lacked the detailed analysis and close working with the passages that would be expected of responses in the high/very high range. The expression was much less sophisticated and was not always clear and coherent.

Low-range responses were often very short and somewhat formulaic. The students tended to treat each passage in isolation, sometimes writing only one paragraph per passage. There was no real attempt to link the passages or to show how these offered an insight into the concerns and views of the wider text. Such responses were often limited by poor expression and a lack of coherence. There was a tendency to retell the story or paraphrase the passages. Students need to be able to discriminate between describing, explaining and analysing. Often comments on the text's views and values were not integrated into the essay or shown to be implicit in the text but added at the end of the essay.

The introduction to the response should be clearly and explicitly linked to the passages and should lead in to the interpretation of the text. Too many students offered prepared introductions that had little, if anything, to do with the specified passages. Often the time spent on such an introduction would have been much better spent on language analysis and an engagement with the text. Students may well choose to start their response by directly addressing one of the passages.

The following are examples of introductions that show a range of abilities.

High range

In 'Mrs Dalloway' Woolf elucidates by way of repeated visual and aural metaphors, a unity of design which allows the experiences of the characters to be perceived through a single metaphorical vision. The odd echoes which permeate the fabric of the novel- ranging from the 'lead circles' of Big Ben to the disruptive sounds of motor cars in Westminster- reveal the delicate intricacy of Woolf's final vision: to draw together the disparate fragments of life into a procession, an 'assembly' perpetuated by a ceaseless succession, in a way which is illustrative of the human experience.

The gash 'breaking open the ferny bed' reflects the fraught nature of Heaney's poetry, and the cataclysmic tension between violence and beauty. Embracing the Aisling tradition that portrays Ireland as a woman, Heaney exposes the brutality and violence his country has had to endure as a result of sectarian cruelty and warfare.

Szyborska is a poet of philosophical reflection who undermines 'truths' and conveys existential terrors through her use of humour, wit and irony. In 'The Museum' she comically discusses the transience of life and the futility of any attempt at 'Eternity' by positing mortality as a 'race' with a material object, her dress.

Cormac McCarthy explores the nature of loss and the effect this has on John Grady. Death plays a major role in his movement from innocence to experience, explored deeply throughout Passage 1 and 2, yet so too does the loss of love in Passage 3 mould Grady and his understanding of life.

In 'Ideal Landscape', 'Twenty-One Love Poems' and 'North American Time' Rich weaves a rich tapestry of the cultural and emotional struggle women face in a hegemonic society which resists the idea of social change, authentic communication and the liberation from the oppressors from 'this still unexcavated hole/ called civilization, this act of translation, this half world'.

Medium range

Within passage 3 Shakespeare demonstrates Antony's transcendence in death as in death he has risen higher than he ever would in life. This is achieved through Shakespeare's tone of admiration and God-like imagery towards Antony which is used by Cleopatra.

Low range

The pessimistic attitude of Sybylla evokes a minor anger within the reader. Sybylla speaks of weariness and how her life will soon become the same as that of the common people of her town. Miles Franklin – the author- uses many unnecessary adjectives when describing Sybylla to make her appear as if she is quite over-dramatic.

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It is important that students write a cohesive response and that they demonstrate an ability to move smoothly between the passages. The following excerpts show this effectively.

However, this is not to say that Capote does not explore the damage caused by Perry and Dick. This is abundantly clear in the depressing scene in Passage 2.

Eliot moves from his own search to find healing and forgiveness in 'Ash Wednesday' to the search of the Magi to find the Christ Child and all the difficulties, they too, encounter.

Some students demonstrated a lack of knowledge of the text, often being unable to locate the given passage correctly in its context. This was a particular problem with the second passage from *Jane Eyre* but was also evident with many other texts. It appeared that some students wrote on poems they had never before seen.

Genre confusion remains problematic. It is not so much a worry if a student labels a play as a novel – as was the case with *Two Brothers*, *A Doll's House* and other texts – the real concern is when a drama text is treated as a novel with no awareness of dramatic techniques. Some poems were referred to as novels (Ash-Wednesday) others as plays (North American Time). Students still tend to set some texts in the wrong historical period – *Mrs Dalloway*, *Pygmalion* and *Persuasion* were sometimes ascribed to the Victorian era. Ibsen was sometimes placed in the eighteenth century. The use of colloquial language remains a problem. Phrases used in a classroom discussion are not always appropriate in a formal Literature examination. Some examples were 'rolling with the punches', 'Anne is past her use-by date', 'significant other', 'not on his wish list', 'Rochester's top dog attitude', 'Rochester sees himself as an alpha male', 'Jane's pop up excesses of her wedding drama'. These phrases did not demonstrate a sensitive awareness of the text or a sophisticated ability to grapple with the ideas and concerns of the text.

Students need to demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the text and the ability to respond to and analyse language. They must be able to draw on the passages to develop their interpretation, being aware that there may be different ways of looking at the text. They also need to show how the passage is integral to an understanding and appreciation of the wider text.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Response 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	4	4	7	8	12	14	13	10	9	5	4	2	1	12.8

Response 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	1	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	4	5	6	9	12	13	12	9	8	5	4	2	1	12.3

Novels

The most popular text this year was *Jane Eyre*, while *Persuasion* was the third most popular. Many of the responses to *Jane Eyre* were unable to place the second passage correctly in its context. The 'inferior woman' to whom Jane is referring is not Bertha, of whose relationship to Rochester Jane is unaware until the marriage ceremony, but Blanche Ingram. This is a significant passage in the text because it shows Jane's strength and acknowledgment of her own worth and precedes her agreement to marry Rochester. The reference to the chestnut tree and the proposal led into Passage 3. Students need to be thoroughly familiar with their texts. The responses to *Persuasion* were not generally as strong as the Austen answers in previous years, although some students wrote well. Responses tended to concentrate on the first passage and then to refer to the happy ending. Louisa's reference to Lady Russell in Passage 2 could have provided support for her actions and views in Passage 1, as would the rather flighty character of Louisa have offered a balance to that of Anne. Passage 3 offered an opportunity for close reading but was often ignored. The responses on *Mrs Dalloway* were often very good; it appeared that students appreciated the opportunity to discuss all the major characters and dealt well with the passage of time. Some analysed the unsatisfactory meeting of Peter and Clarissa in Passage 2 with insight. There were some excellent responses on *All the Pretty Horses*. This complex text provided an opportunity for close language analysis and a study of the central character's development. The author's use of language provides a chance to look closely at the features of the text, such as the atypical use of punctuation and the recurrent motifs, such as horses, blood and stone. The *My Brilliant Career* essays often lacked close analysis and some students were unsure what to make of Sybylla. There were fewer responses on the other novels, but some on *Love in the Time of Cholera* were very good. Some students thought the woman in the last passage of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* referred to Ernestina



and not Sarah, which constituted a serious misreading of the novel. *The Cat's Table* responses suggested that students had enjoyed the text but few went beyond discussing the eclectic group of passengers at the Cat's Table. Passages 2 and 3 offered a chance to discuss Michael's relationship with Emily and the use of hindsight and narrative voice in the novel. There were only two responses on *The Aunt's Story*.

Plays

It was pleasing to see so many students aware of the various dramatic effects employed by playwrights. Play texts were popular with students; *Antony and Cleopatra* was the second most popular text and *The Bacchae*, *The Tempest*, *A Doll's House*, *Pygmalion*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *Two Brothers* all attracted many students. Only *Arcadia* was not especially popular. Responses to *Antony and Cleopatra* ranged from very high to low. Students could have further linked the passages, especially contrasting Antony's language in Passage 1 with that of Passage 2. Students could have done more with Cleopatra's wonderful language in her eulogy to Antony in Passage 3. These passages provided an opportunity to analyse all the major characters and to consider the differing values of Rome and Egypt. *The Tempest* responses also reflected varying abilities. Some students wanted to discuss power and the role of Trinculo, Stephano and Caliban rather than focusing closely on the passages. Many responses missed the magical elements in the play and the sense of it as theatre with Prospero as director. Some students seemed confused about how much Prospero was implicated in the love affair of Ferdinand and Miranda. *The Bacchae* was well handled, although there could have been further analysis of the lyrical choral work in the second passage, especially contrasting it with the horror in the third. Some students became confused when trying to use Greek words; they are better advised to use their own voices. In *A Doll's House*, many students claimed that the lie about the macaroons was the only one of which Nora was guilty. This was again a misreading as Nora had secretly, over a long time, been earning money to pay off her illegal debt. The whole doll's house is constructed on very rocky foundations. Otherwise, students usually analysed the first and third passages very well and many made apposite references to Krogstad. Few students discussed the use of multiple speakers on stage having separate conversations in Passage 1 of *Two Brothers*. They needed to visualise the effect of this on the audience. Few mentioned the terrible irony of the situation in the second passage where Eggs is humiliating and doubting the truth of the man whom the audience knows he will kill. Some students argued that Rayson was sympathetic to Eggs because her view is that Australia needs a strong prime minister. This seemed an unlikely reading. *Pygmalion* was a popular choice and even weaker students were able to develop an interpretation using Eliza's claim in Passage 3 that it was the kindness and good manners of Colonel Pickering that made her a lady. Students had some difficulty sorting out the English class system and many chose not to use Passage 2 or treated it in isolation. The Albee play was generally competently handled, but being aware of the stage directions and the nuances of language was very important.

Short stories

The question asked students to use one or more of the passages as a basis for a discussion of the text as a whole. However, many students treated each passage in isolation, with little consideration of the concerns and techniques of the collection. Some students used only one story and few discussions went beyond the passage to show a wider understanding of that story or to attempt to link the passages. This was particularly the case with the Proulx stories, where students could have considered the disturbing and, to some extent unexplained, deaths in each of the passages. The Carey stories were a popular choice and students seemed to take Carey's bizarre world in their stride. There was a tendency to ignore the third passage, which looked at male/female relationships. The Kate Kennedy stories were quite popular but many responses showed a lack of detailed knowledge and again there were common concerns that were overlooked. Some students thought Mel in Passage 1 was married and others that she was in late middle age. Some students thought the protagonist in Passage 2 was a woman. The final line in Passage 3 would have provided lots of opportunities to develop a reading. Students could have commented on the use of first-person and second-person narratives.

Other literature

This was the least popular section of the paper, but as in previous years many students chose to write on *In Cold Blood*. There were some very good responses, although some students confused Perry and Dick when Perry was looking at his reflection, and some thought the prosecutor, Green, was the judge. Some students ignored Passage 2 but others made excellent use of it. There were few responses on *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*. The other two texts were handled quite well, but the Orwell responses could have concentrated more on the different lives led by the poor in Paris compared with the demoralised lives of the tramps in London. Few mentioned Paddy's inability to steal the milk and the pathetic effort he made with his clothing. The passages afforded a good opportunity to discuss Orwell's views, especially on unnecessary and demeaning work, and the abandonment of the poor by people in general and even by welfare organisations, but many students did not avail themselves of this. Students made good use of the third passage from *The Tall Man*, effectively using the contrasts between the lives of the indigenous people and white people.



Poetry

The Eliot poetry was extremely popular and there were some perceptive responses, although the poems proved challenging for weaker students. Together, the passages provided an account of the poet's spiritual journey in which he had not yet been fully healed, just as the Magus felt ambivalent about his journey. Students explored the imagery in the first passage thoughtfully but did not discuss the third passage in any detail. Heaney's poetry was likewise a popular choice and responses reflected a range of ability. Students wrote well on *Mid-Term Break* but more mention could have been made of the candles and snowdrops that reflected a shift in tone. This natural imagery could have been discussed in more detail also in the memorial for the poet, Francis Ledwidge, whose lines were included in the poem. When discussing *Act of Union*, students concentrated on its political overtones, often not acknowledging the sexual relationship of the narrator. Too many students saw this as a rape and ignored the sense of regretful sympathy the speaker felt for the woman facing childbirth. This poem could also have been compared to the Bog poems. There were very few responses to the poems by Peter Porter. The responses to the Adrienne Rich poems reflected a mixed ability, but some were excellent. Some students were misled by the reference to 'unavoidable violence' in VI of *Twenty-One Love Poems* and accordingly misread this poem. The responses on Rossetti were generally quite competent but tended to ignore the rich natural imagery, which is an important part of her work and reflects a longing and appreciation of the world that she seems so keen to renounce. Many students responded to the poems by Szymborska. Most wrote well and seemed engaged with the language and concerns. A few students referred to a large number of poems without analysis or focus on the passages. It is good to show knowledge of the poetry, as the question in fact requires, but not at the expense of some analysis and close working with the set passages.

Student samples

The following are samples of complete student work. The first five responses are of a very high standard, the sixth of a high standard and the last of a medium standard.

Sample 1

Nominated text: *The Tempest* – William Shakespeare

At its core, it is Shakespeare's preoccupations with "bondage" and servitude which constitute the essence of The Tempest. Be it the enforced deference of the "brave spirit" Ariel or the subjugation of Miranda by her very gender, Shakespeare is fascinated with the tensions between the enslaver and the enslaved. Ultimately, however, the play is "confined" by its very form as an artificial and pre-conceived construct, and it is this inherent illusion of theatre which Shakespeare both illuminates and castigates in this, his final play.

The characters of The Tempest are bound in an intricate web of power dynamics. Despite this, there is revealed to be something akin to a co-dependency in these relations. Though Prospero, through a combination of magic and rhetoric, has no qualms in commanding the obedience of his servant, the dainty Ariel, the success of Prospero's "project" for vengeance is intricately linked to Ariel's powers. Despite the implicit superiority discernible in Prospero's use of a possessive pronoun in referring to Ariel as "[his] brave spirit", it is solely through his command of Ariel that the events of The Tempest are able to take place. Indeed, as Prospero "bad'st [him]", he conceived the cataclysmic tempest which lends the play its name. Likewise, Prospero's machinations of the "rare affection" between his daughter and the virtuous Prince Ferdinand secures the unhindered return to "[his] dukedom". Though the inherent inferiority of these 'slaves' is expounded, their simultaneous necessity is contrastingly exposed.

As an extreme antithesis to these master-servant dynamics, Prospero's construction of the relationship which blossoms between the innocent Miranda and Ferdinand represents a case of willing bondage. Though the audience may initially regard their love as tainted with Prospero's interference, the fervent confessions of love between the two allows Shakespeare to purport the dominance of the natural world over the ideal, fantastical realm. The repetition of such words as "maid" and "servant" reveal a rare moment in which "bondage" collides with "freedom" to create a love rendered acute by its innocent passion. The frequent enjambment of Ferdinand and Miranda's verse is a testament to the symbiosis of the two, with Miranda's assertion that "[she] 'll be [his] servant/Whether [he] will or no" flowing seamless onto Ferdinand's tender exhalation, "My mistress, dearest". Though influenced by Prospero's meddlings, the pure force of their love transcends the typical bonds of enslavement to reveal a union whose joy is apparent in the joyous assonance of Ferdinand's exclamation, "O heaven, O earth."

At the forefront of the Tempest, Miranda is the sole female. Despite this, her role is paradoxical; she is at once the voiceless female and the social pawn crucial to Prospero's designs. Condemned by the very fixity of her gender, Miranda's worth is measured by her aesthetic appeal and the preservation of "the jewel in [her] dower" – her chastity. For a renaissance prince like Ferdinand, this was of the utmost importance in a potential wife. Ironically, however, it is in offering this to Ferdinand that Miranda transcends her assumed role as the meek, submissive daughter of Prospero. Her tentative inquiry to Ferdinand, "Do you love me?" is vulnerable and exposed – here, Miranda defies her father and offers herself fully to Prospero. The syntax of this query is starkly juxtaposed against Ferdinand's impassioned response, the breathlessness of his assertion that he does "love, prize, honour" Miranda betraying his emotion. The use of the word "prize", however, once again reduces Miranda to little more



as a possession and her self-deprecating description of her “unworthiness” advocates that such societal constraints cannot completely be overcome.

Throughout this moment of raw vulnerability between this young couple, the passion is undermined by Prospero’s silent, invisible presence. As the stage direction reveals, he is “aside”, slyly regarding the fruition of his manipulations. However, in his ruminations on this “fair encounter” there lies a certain mourning. At the cost of the fulfilling of his vocation, Prospero loses his beloved daughter. In the same vein, though Prospero’s teasing tone in replying “How now? Moody?” In response to Ariel’s plea for “[his] liberty”, this too is granted at the close of the play. It is painfully ironic that it is at the height of Prospero’s power that he loses all which made him content on this “bare island” – obsessed with “perform[ing]” his “appertaining business”, the acute sense of loss in the forsaking of his servants and his daughter is most apparent in the melancholy air of the epilogue, in which he bemoans his “want” of “spirits to enforce”. The truest pleasure is felt not in the consummation, but in the pursuit of that consummation.

If The Tempest is to be regarded as an autobiographical work, it is Prospero who acts as Shakespeare’s surrogate. The stage direction, “spoken by Prospero”, alerts the audience that here, in the epilogue of Shakespeare’s final play, what they see on the “bare island” of the stage is not Prospero, a construction – rather, it is here that Shakespeare dissolves the fourth wall and addresses the audience directly, referring to them as “you”. Ferdinand’s earlier praises of “heaven” in uniting him with Miranda are starkly ironic – over the entirety of The Tempest, Prospero is the invisible playwright, manipulating his actors in order to achieve his own desired outcome. This hubris in adopting such powers meant only for the “heavens” is condemned, with the frequent references to “work” and “business” trivialising the events of the play – ultimately, it is nothing but a “project” controlled singlehandedly by this ageing usurped king.

Despite this, the aim of this project was to “please”, and it is here that Shakespeare reveals the artificiality of theatre itself. Just as Prospero and as an extension, Shakespeare “confined” the characters of this play, he too is confined in the very form of this final speech, with its simplistic rhyming couplets of “dwell” and “spell”, “want” and “enchant” binding this shadow figure of Shakespeare. Prospero’s actor and Shakespeare alike implore the audience to “free all faults” the playwright has committed in partaking in such a construct. The true omniscient ruler of the theatre is not the playwright, but the audience themselves. What Shakespeare aspires to advocate is the defining power of an individual’s power – here he relinquishes his role as the playwright and bows down to the audience. It is, after all, solely the “good hands” of the audience which can grant Prospero and Shakespeare their freedom – they are the true kings of the theatre.

Sample 2

Nominated text: Mrs Dalloway – Virginia Woolf

The tensions between individual perceptions and the communal body of society collide in Virginia Woolf’s Mrs Dalloway. In attempting to resolve the continual interruptions of the “indifferent” passage of time and the remnants of the past, Woolf endeavours to transcend the unknowability of existence and in doing so, attach her own meaning to the fundamental properties of the human life – death, and the “exquisite beauty” of living.

Throughout the single day in London over which the novel takes place, Clarissa Dalloway’s journey through this labyrinth of society is constantly interrupted by reminders of the past. The frequent door imagery in describing how “the door had shut” and “the door opened” provides a literal representation of the opening of the door to the past. When Clarissa’s old lover Peter Walsh visits her in her home, she feels a simultaneous longing and detachment. When Peter stands “with his back to her”, this physicality of the unreachability of the past provokes Clarissa to picture her potential future with Peter. With this sudden passion evident in the cyclical syntax of her musings on partaking in a “great voyage” with Peter, the passion of the rolling sentences and the frequent “and”s contained within the finality of the thought that “it was now over”. This paramouncy of resonances of the past is likewise illuminated in Clarissa’s reunion with Sally Seton, her joy discernible from the short bursts of “that voice! It was Sally Seton! Sally Seton!”, the repetition of exclamation marks betraying a deep ecstasy in encountering this figure of the past. However, the repetition of the full name “Sally Seton” carries with it a detachedness and an artificiality – Clarissa is unable to unite her past perceptions of her old friend with this “older” self, and it is this transcendence of imprints of the past which Woolf advocates in fully existing in the present.

Concurrent with these interruption’s of the past, however, is the stifling artificiality of society which looms over the characters of Mrs Dalloway. Sally’s unexpected comment, “I have five enormous boys”, is startling in its lack of belonging – it is as if Sally is attempting to distance herself from the homosexual relations that existed between her and Clarissa in the past. Here, at Clarissa’s party, the presence of the Prime Minister serves to highlight the disenchantment of Britannia in post-war London. “This symbol of what they all stood for” is referred to contemptuously as a “poor chap”. This embodiment of English society is little more than an “ordinary” man, playing at being “somebody”. “Nobody looked at him” – the attendants of Clarissa’s party, survivors of the catastrophic war attempt to ignore this representation of society. Despite this, the presence of the Prime Minister himself reveals the undeniable pressures of societal constraints.

Though the Prime Minister is noticed by all at the party, the disparaging ruminations of the party-goers are starkly contrasted against the single comment made by Peter Walsh – “The Prime Minister”. This disjunction between the physical and metaphysical preoccupations of any individual is similarly apparent in Clarissa’s meeting with Peter earlier in the day – Though



the room is silent, Peter and Clarissa alike are immersed in the chaos of the mind, each pondering the arresting joy and awkwardness of their encounter in their own stream of consciousness. Woolf's utilisation of this unique method of writing allows a glimpse into the disorientating yet starkly personal world of the subjective psyche. Peter's violent attempt to convey this is interrupted, his frantic inquiry "Are you happy, Clarissa?" cut off by the opening of the door, the hyphenated end of this attempt to communication representing the impenetrability of another's soul.

Though the individuality of existence is heavily expounded upon, the rare moments in which humankind is united allow Woolf to expose one of the beauties of community. At Clarissa's party, the stream of consciousness flits constantly from character to character – however, this is astounding in its naturalness. Though Woolf's rapid switching between character perspectives allows her only to skim the surface of such minor characters as Ellie Henderson, this in itself is a testament to the interconnectedness of life. Though the reader knows nothing of "Mrs Bletchley" or "Mr. Bowley", this only serves to reinforce Woolf's belief that all lives have value. The appearance of an aeroplane above the streets of London is another example of the tension between the individual and communal reception of an extraneous, seemingly mundane happening as this. However, this aeroplane is an allegory to life itself, and it is in scrutinising the differing perceptions of this aeroplane that Woolf intimates the unknowability of life. Each character attempts to fixate their interpretation to this aeroplane – to one person, it is "an E" that the aeroplane is writing; to another, it spells "toffee". The hyphenated sentences in describing how the airplane swooped "like a skater –" "or a dancer –" represents the fragmentation of the human existence. Distracted as they are by this mystery of life, the parenthesised comment that "the car went in and nobody looked at it" allows Woolf to advocate the immersion in life to escape the permeation of inevitable oblivion, the car earlier being regarded as a symbol of death.

Though each person wonders, "what word was [the aeroplane] writing", Woolf warns against the labelling of life as this. The "exquisite beauty" of life, as Septimus Warren Smith "states, emanates from its transience and its unknowability. To attempt to fully comprehend existence is to rob it of its "unimaginable beauty" – in this way what Woolf ultimately purports is the fulfilling living of the present in order to truly grasp the ecstatic nature of living.

Sample 3

Nominated text: *In Cold Blood* – Truman Capote

*When Truman Capote wrote his so-called non-fiction novel, *In Cold Blood*, he intended to create an exact report of the events surrounding the murder of the Clutter family, to preserve a slice of reality. On this count, he failed. However, in doing so, he proved the contention of his work far more effectively than success would have. In the text, he shows the reader the true complexity of reality, the layers that compose people, and the impossibility of ever truly understanding one another; and demonstrates that any sense, any meaningful design that we may claim to see in the world is a fiction, a product of the stories that we tell ourselves and each other in order to sleep soundly at night, and that our persistent efforts to sustain belief in these stories does more harm than discordant reality could ever do.*

In the first passage, Capote introduces the character of Perry Smith one of the two men who murdered the Clutter family. Perry is potentially the most developed character in the text, as Capote was clearly fascinated with the path that led him to develop into a man capable of the "strange ferocious murders" described by Green in passage three; and he is also constructed in a shockingly sympathetic manner. In this early appearance, Capote instantly has Perry standing "in the sun", a position which implies goodness, as compared to shadow or dark. Many of his initial physical descriptions are positive, such as "pink lips", "perky nose", "roguish animation", and "dark, moist eyes". The mental image initially produced is charming, perhaps somewhat cheeky, but generally attractive. This contrasts sharply with later descriptions of his legs and body, but Capote is careful to ensure our initial impression is positive. The activities in which he is mentioned being involved, too, create an impression of creativity and sensitivity – "singing" and composing "[ballads]", do not seem like the past-times of a cold-blooded killer. Capote does not ever excuse Perry's actions, and does not let us forget them – from the very beginning of the novel, the reader is well aware that Smith and Hickock committed the crime – there is no mystery here. However, what he does is portray Perry in a way which reminds us that a killer is not all he is – that he is a human being not a monster, no matter how much many people – particularly the people of Holcomb would like to think he is. Perry's "changeling's face" is a clear depiction of this – in listing the expressions it produces, "ominous", "impish", "soulful", Capote is listing all the things this man can or could be, in describing how the "corrupt gipsy became the gentle romantic", he implies that Perry could be both – that the layers of human nature allow for one individual to be more than simply good or bad, as the people of Holcomb think. Capote emphasises the falsity of this dichotomy in order to impress upon the reader that the judgments we make of others are often false, uninformed or too simple to do justice to reality. We are shown these different sides to Perry so that we can see that in many ways he is like any other human being – that the lines separating ourselves from those we find it comforting to view as monsters are actually very thin.

Capote does not only portray the killers in a more positive light than the reader would often expect, but also turns a negative view upon the townspeople of Holcomb, upon the survivors, those grieving the loss of a number of members of their community. In order to do so, he depicts a certain kind of corruption, a coldness, running though the perfect wholesome fantasy that they created as their world. The auction of the Clutters' belongings depicted in passage 2, contains a kind of horror a world away from that of the murders themselves, and yet still incredibly chilling to the reader. The idea suggested by Capote, that the crowd was "lured" to the event by the "bargain prices" attached to the items owned by the murdered family, is distasteful in the extreme – these terms, used together, carrying connotations of a kind of scavenger's sense, a heartlessness in that the community is happy to take the Clutter's possessions as long as they get them cheaply.



There is also morbid enthusiasm suggested in the fact that there was “someone keen” to purchase such a mundane and useless item as a “bunch of rusty keys”. Capote gives the reader the impression that the community did not, in fact, care for the Clutters nearly as much as they generally claim in the rest of the novel, an impression made most deeply by the report that “nobody seemed really to want Babe”. The only person who does is Nancy’s friend Susan Kidwell, and between this, the fact that Sue “loved the old horse,” and the association it carries of truly happy memories of Nancy, the horse, as a pet which was arguably a member of the family, as pets often are, comes to stand as a symbol of the last trace of the life of the Clutter family. That no-one wants her, while they were “keen” for the other items, creates an impression of greed and materialism, and a disinterest in the people involved in the situation. Capote shows the reader that ordinary people, those who see themselves and each other as good, who would ordinarily be portrayed as good in a text of this type, are capable of coldness and cruelty just as Smith and Hickock were – perhaps in a different way, but that this potential exists at all reminds us again that the lines we draw are false between ourselves are false, and based on a flawed and inaccurate view of the world. We would like to see other people as simple, good or bad, but a summary of this sort does not do justice to the infinite complexity of learning, reality and existence.

In the third passage, we are, through the speech made by the lawyer for the prosecution, effectively presented with a summary of the townspeople’s view of the Clutter case. Although it was, in reality, enough to ensure the execution of the two accused, Capote presents it in such a way as to highlight the fictitious nature of the lawyer’s viewpoint, the simplicity he attempts to create from the complex facts. This is particularly evident when we see Green contradict himself – he calls the murders “strange” and “ferocious”, in particular the phrase “strange” implying us of our inability to understand the situation. This is fairly accurate, however he follows it with an accusation of the motive being “money”, and calling the crime “cold and calculated”. From all the information Capote has already given us, all the time outlining the history and mental state of the two killers, we cannot help but see Green, here, as being wrong – we cannot think for a second that the motive was actually money, given Dick’s desire to “spatter hair over the walls”, and Perry’s bitterness towards those accepted by a world from which he had and would always be rejected.

This inaccuracy then undermines the rest of Green’s argument, particularly when Capote describes his voice breaking “as though strangled by the intensity of his own loathing” for Perry and Dick – this suggestion of falsity implies that his point of view is entirely fictitious, as does the phrase in the conclusion of his speech, “once upon a time”. This phrase is loaded with meaning in our culture, and the reading of its inclusion here is instantly clear – Green is telling a story. He is attempting to make sense of the world around him, of the events that have taken place, by attempting to impose a meaningful design upon them. He places Smith and Hickock in the roles of fairy-tale villains, purely evil, the Clutters and the town as their victims, purely good. He gives them motives which we can understand – which we do not agree with but but that we can make sense of through our life experiences, while it is difficult to even imagine Smith’s experiences, in particular and the experience of suffering a personality disorder, as Hickock was diagnosed with. However, the case that Green is describing, and that Capote is recording, is not a fairy-tale – it was reality, complicated and layered and impossible to ever fully understand. It defies single explanation, understanding, and depiction, leading to Capote’s work being just as false an account as any other given, despite his desire for accuracy. However, what he does do, through the limited look he can give us at the complicated nature of the world, is remind the reader of the dangers associated with forgetting how little we do and can know, and the great injustices which can occur when we fail to remember that we live not in a world of heroes and villains, but of human beings.

Sample 4

Nominated text: My Brilliant Career – Miles Franklin

Sybylla Melvyn, the protagonist and narrator of Stella Miles Franklin’s classic work of both feminist and Australian literature, My Brilliant Career can be a deeply irritating character. The repetition and constant analysis of her surrounding’s which characterise the internal monologue that effectively makes up the entirety of the text can become frustrating for the reader and the seeming contradictions between her beliefs, feelings and actions are, at times, baffling. However, these characteristics come together to create a complex and three-dimensional character, in whom Franklin depicts a time, place, and we cannot help but feel much of her own self.

In the first passage, there are a number of examples of a habit frequently seen in Franklin’s writing throughout the text. The repetition of words and ideas – of “weariness” and “weary”, and later in the extract, “life” and the ironic titular phrase “brilliant career”, creates a sense of imprisonment, a cyclical state of mind which can at times be quite frustrating to read. However, as a result of this Franklin conveys to us a sense of Sybylla’s frustration, of the way she feels trapped in the roles imposed on her by world. She is quite powerless, in this fiercely patriarchal society, in which a girl of “sixteen years and ten months” is never taken seriously or afforded the freedoms and rights men possess, and which Sybylla desires. The word “weary” is used a number of times again in the third passage, which appears at the very end of the book, creating a sense of the continuing situation, the unbroken cycle of Sybylla’s frustration, and the exhaustion she feels at this ongoing life to which she is subjected. Our sympathies are in this way aroused by Franklin, reminding us of Sybylla’s lack of power to escape her situation. We can, too, well imagine how tired she is, as her ceaseless efforts to escape her role in society, to convince those around her to take her seriously and not simply see her as some pretty, silly object are apparent on every page of the novel – the over-blown, overtly formal and melodramatic way in which Sybylla speaks seeming, on one hand, to be Franklin mocking romantic conventions of flowery and poetic language, in a deliberate rejection of gender roles which would paint this as ‘feminine’ literature; but on the other hand, it also carried a kind of desperation to be seen as intellectual – Sybylla is, in using overly long and formal words and phrases, seen through these three passages and the rest of the text, such as “haggard”, “smote”, “forced expression,” “pertinent”, “pretensions”, “vanquished,” and so on, to appear intelligent, to be taken seriously. Her every word



and action is a part of her fight to be independent and respected by her society, and given her lack of success, it is little wonder that she is tired. Many first novels are suspected to be somewhat autobiographical, and while this suggestion horrified Franklin, it seems difficult to deny in the case of *My Brilliant Career*. While the events of Sybylla's life may not exactly mirror those of her creator, it seems likely that this sense of pent-up rage and frustration – the novel literally opens with a howl of pain – comes from the author, expressing her own desires and dislikes through the character of Sybylla.

In the contrast between Sybylla's thoughts and her actions – because, as both narrator and character, we can see clearly the times when she does not adhere to her own doctrine and demands – we can see the complexity of her character, her youthful indecision, and the influence of society upon her. In the second passage, the reader is somewhat startled by Sybylla's delight at her own beauty – the positivity of her description the “clearest and brightest” “eyes and skin”, her “lips of brilliant scarlet,” the pleasing appearance of her “chest and pair of arms”. Given Sybylla's ferocious anger directed towards the expectations placed upon women at other points in the novel, the positive femininity of terms such as “girlish” and the “joy and merriment” she feels at appearing thus, seem rather out of character. However, we often see – as in her plan to Aunt Helen to describe her as “not completely hideous” – a deep insecurity, and so drive a sense that a good deal of her anger is a result of feeling out of place. She is preoccupied with the idea of her “sphere”, and feels that she is not in it in either Possum Gully or Barney's Gap or even truly at Caddagat. But we have the sense that she does not actually dislike all aspects of her society as strongly as it often seems – instead, she resents the sense of being trapped by those elements which do not suit her, and so lashes out at all the world around her, as symbolic of these restrictive elements.

These contradictions are also apparent in the third passage. She speaks positively of the people of Australia, proclaiming herself “proud” to be one of them, but proceeds to speak about them in very exclusive terms, as though she was not of them, throughout which she remains positive, wishing that she were “more worthy to be one of you”. The summary of this speech, however, in which she is again included, is more negative, the use of the term “only”, as in “only one of yourselves”, “only an unnecessary, little, bush commoner” and “only a woman”, implying that they are something lesser, a group of which she does not wish to be part. The sections of this speech seem deeply at odds with one another and yet, Franklin's purpose in this is to create a cohesive sense of Sybylla's identity, or lack thereof. She respects the peasants, even longs to be one of them, just as she does with those people she perceives to be proper women; however, the conditions of the lives of these groups are repellant to her, and this distaste cannot help but come out, be conveyed to the reader subtly through Franklin's layered characterization. Sybylla does not feel at home here, and although she is ashamed of herself for this – as the views impressed upon her by society have convinced her that she is wrong, an aberration, rather than simply different to those who surround her – she cannot change the way she is, and dispense with her feeling that the world in which she lives should be different, not her. Franklin depicts this land as incredibly harsh, in the first passage, through the “wind-smitten clouds,” the “fierce relentless glare of the sun”, and the “parched and thirsty ground”; and this serves as an effective metaphor for the harshness of the culture of this land upon Sybylla. She is not suited to this life, and shows it – and through her, Franklin shows the difficulty of being such, of not belonging but having no ability to change this. Sybylla is a young woman in an extremely masculine environment, and has no ability to move herself elsewhere. As a result, every page of this novel, which is constructed in many ways as a record of her perception of the world, rather than of the world as it necessarily is, conveys a tangible sense of frustration to the reader, and while we may initially be irritated by Sybylla, by the conclusion of the text we share this frustration as we have been placed into her position, effectively into her head, by the words of Miles Franklin.

Sample 5

Nominated text: *Collected Poems 1909–1962* – TS Eliot

The “dead geranium”, “temperate valley” and “pasture scene” denote Eliot's change use of naturalistic imagery in conjunction with his perception of wider society. Initially degraded and debauched by the fragmentation of WW1, after his baptism in 1927, Eliot leaves the “dry” “cactus land” which is devoid of culture to find rejuvenation in “the Birth” of Christ.

The “lunar incantations” & “twisted things” of *Rhapsody* are everything that the narrator of *Ash-Wednesday* is trying to transcend by climbing the “first...second third stair”. The hours of “twelve o'clock” until “four o'clock” in *Rhapsody* allow a clean timeframe for the lone narrators' walks down normally “trampled streets”. The “fatalistic drum” of “street-lamps” reveal the light not to illuminate goodness, but what is “crooked”, “torn and stained”. The woman “throws up” “twisted” memories of decay and death and “dust” showing society at the time to be likewise “twisted” due to the isolation and fragmentation of war. The “morsel of rancid butter” and “dead geranium” show corporate indulgences now decayed also as Eliot communicates both modern society's dependence on false social ritual, but its' inability to renew life or bring fulfilment.

It is a decade later until *Journey* is written and it similarly includes bodily pleasures such as “silken girls” and “empty wineskins”, the second stanza is Eliot's earliest poem using positive natural imagery where the “running streak” quells his thirst for meaning explored in earlier poems. The narrator of *Journey* reflects on how he and the other two kings had travelled to “the Birth”. This companionship contrasts with *Rhapsody*'s isolation similar to Prufrock's or the narrator of *Portrait of a Lady*. Furthermore, this poem leaves behind the fragmentation of memories, disjointed by the windy night” or the plethora of voices in *The Waste Land* to retell one story. Part of the Ariel Poems, *Journey* and these stylistic changes to construction symbolise Eliot's move into the Anglican Church of England where he went to mass daily, possibly reducing his feeling of loneliness or isolation and reinstating order. It is still Eliot's narrative voice with consistent “liquor and women” like the indulgences in “cakes and ices” and “Grishkin the crouched Brazilian jaguar”, however, the order of this poem makes a break from others and shows Eliot's belief in the Christian order.



This faith is reiterated in *Ash Wednesday* written in 1930, known as the conversion poem. The “sunless dry geranium” is rejuvenated to a “maytime” “pasture scene”. This poem’s lament “Lord, I am not worthy” personalises it as it shifts away from the impersonal writings in various languages, voices, myths and characters. Through this past stylistic habit Eliot, it seems was attempting to incorporate all “time present” with “time past” as explained in *Burnt Norton*. Similarly, using “the Birth” of Jesus results in the poem belonging to many faiths, not Eliot himself. With spirituality Eliot had satisfied his need for links with others previously attained through allusions. This poem is different, looser in form and punctuation as it is his own.

Instead of society “twisting the lilac stalk” and being dominated by “lusts and luxuries” of “taking toast and tea” to prevent real, inner contemplation, Eliot (or the narrator) now climbs the stairs to transcend the corporal for the cerebral, leaving below the “figs” and “hawthorn blossom” seen only through a “slotted window”. These images present “hope and despair” to achieve salvation by mortifying the flesh.

Throughout the collection Eliot is never “still” as the imagery, allusions, voices and narrators are overwhelming in accumulation. In *Rhapsody* the narrator cannot “sit still” but is forced to walk the streets with “divisions and precisions”, “visions and revisions”. Women “come and go”, are forgotten and remembered; but never “still”. Likewise time is always moving with seasons conflicting with “winter” & “summer” in the same stanza, months with conflicting seasons: “October” and “spring” and hours of the marching “Half-past one”, “half-past two” and “half-past three” beginning each monotonous stanza predictably. It is in *Ash Wednesday* that Eliot pleads: “Teach us to sit still”, in the first and last chapter. To find his peace, meditation is needed, to “sit still” in “contemplation”.

Simultaneously, Eliot never suggests this journey to salvation and inner spiritual peace will be easy or straightforward. On the other hand, in his too most religious poems, it is warned that “the Birth” of religion also brings “a Death” to old ways and habits, and that the path will be “hard and bitter agony”. Likewise the stairs are “twisted” and contorted and “strength” is felt to be “fading, fading”. The “Journey” is not simple nor straightforward, but the “sunlight”, “laughter” and “stillness” of *Burnt Norton* tells us it can be worth it.

Overall, the “Windy Nights” and “overwhelming questions” of this collection are resolved in *Ash-Wednesday* where Eliot renounces the corporal gratification and indulgences he so despised to transcend to understanding. Despite this hard transformation; elements remain of Eliot’s first published work; the “sweet”, light, “brown hair” resembles the “arms that lie” upon a table in *Prufrock*. Similarly, the “vapour” and “music of a flute” are reminiscent of “windy spaces”, “dull tom-tom” and transience of “whirling” “water” and “wind in dry grass”. It is “the stillness”, “motion” and “movement” which changes as Eliot matures and finds his own interpretation of peace.

Sample 6

Nominated text: *Down and Out in Paris and London* – George Orwell

George Orwell uses his memoir “*Down and Out in Paris and London*” to shatter his readers’ preconceived notions of poverty, in order to evoke their sympathy and perhaps inspire them to do something in aid of the impoverished. Orwell explores how the poor are shunned in society, and demonstrates to his readers why they must not form judgements based on appearances.

In his depiction of the *Hôtel des Trois Moineaux*, Orwell uses the bugs found in the walls as a metaphor for the poor. The hotel’s walls “housed in innumerable bugs”, and the cracks that hide them were “covered with layer after layer of pink paper”. This can be linked to how the poor are treated by the rich – hidden from plain view so that the unpleasant idea of their poverty does not disturb the upper classes. However, ‘Poverty is a large enough problem, that ignoring it is difficult, and thus the pink paper would “come loose” and the “long lines of bugs” emerged, “ravenously hungry”, similar to the impoverished, who being “fantastically poor”, cannot always afford food. Orwell describes how, in order to get rid of the bugs, “one use to burn sulphur and drive them into the next room”, however, this is merely a short term solution, for “the lodger next door would retort by having his room sulphured, and drive the bugs back.” This driving of the bugs back and forth can be linked to Orwell’s report of tramps later in the book, a group which due to laws enforced by the British Government are constantly on the move, never allowed to stay in one place for long. Orwell thus suggests, that ignoring and shunning those in poverty is a futile task, just like Sisyphian task of hiding and driving away the bugs.

In his memoir, Orwell often deals with exterior surfaces, and demonstrates to his readers how they cannot be used to form judgements and prejudices. In the first passage he presents several anecdotes of the lodgers of the *Hôtel des Trois Moineaux*, he describes an artist, who decently dressed, loafed in the *Montparnasse Cafe*’s everyday.

Orwell’s readers, if they were to meet this man, would believe him rich and respectable. However, his appearance means nothing, for he leaves his mother to work “sixteen hours a day, darning socks at twenty-five centimes a sock.” Just as Orwell teaches his readers not to use the façade of wealth to make assumptions about someone’s good character, he also demonstrates how an appearance of poverty does not denote a malignant personality. Orwell gives an account of Paddy, a tramp who personifies this idea. Despite his “greyish, dirty-in-the-grain look”, Paddy displays kindness, “he insisted on my sharing”, Orwell writes, describing a rare instance when Paddy found food. Before reading “*Down and Out*”, most middle and upper class readers would judge tramps by their shabby clothes and cockney slang, most likely avoiding them for fear of being robbed.



However, Paddy's speech, despite his accent suggesting crime, in reality demonstrates virtue; he tells Orwell. "It don't do a man no good to steal. T'ank God, I ain't never stolen nothin' yet." His improper grammar – such as the use of double negatives "I ain't never" and the shortening of words like "nothin'" – indicate, ostensibly, a criminal. The content of his words, however, highlights Paddy's innocence and respectability. Orwell's anecdotes of the actions of various characters throughout "Down and Out" illustrate to his readers how they should not dismiss the poor due to their dirty appearance.

Instead, Orwell seeks to inspire from his readers social change. Using his essayist tone, Orwell argues against the current treatment of the working and impoverished classes. Rhetorical questions such as, "Is a plongeur's work really necessary to society?" allow readers to question the current social structure and motivate them to forget their own preconceived prejudices and embrace Orwell's own ideas on how the lives of the poor should be improved. He believes plongeurs should not have to toil in the harsh conditions that they do, likening them to Indian gharri ponies. This description of the "gaunt, vicious, things" is revolting, as he evokes an image of "their necks encircled by one vast sore, so that they drag all day on raw flesh." This graphic language, which likens plongeurs to animals, makes their work seem inhumane, and allows Orwell to convince his readers more readily against plongeur work. Orwell's reports on the lives of the impoverished evokes sympathy from his readers towards the poor, thus he can more easily motivate his readers to create social change when he argues against the current system in his essayist tone.

Sample 7

Nominated text: *The Bacchae* – Euripides

'Power and eloquence in a headstrong man spell folly' as Euripides displays through the arrogance of Pentheus and his efforts to 'hunt out' the 'outrageous bacchism' plaguing his power in Thebes. The use of the repeated 'f' sound in fast in iron fetters' displays the spiteful nature of Pentheus whilst emphasising his desire to constrain such influence of the 'oriental conjurer'. Through the use of violent imagery of Pentheus' declaration of 'cut[ting][Dionysus]' head from his shoulders' serves to emphasise the reliance Pentheus has on violence to gain power. Through this Euripides criticizes such violent means of leaders in ancient Greece, particularly during the Peloponnesian War. As such, the violence of which Pentheus plans to pursue foreshadows his own fate confirming Euripides condemnation of his aggressive attitude. Euripides further emphasises the irrationality of Pentheus by angrily challenging well-known prophet Teiresias for who's 'grey hairs' are said to be the only reason his is not in prison with all these crazy females'. Suchly deemed 'pernacious practises' supported by Teiresias are supported by the prophets of credible status to the Ancient Athenian audience and as such, the audience is persuaded to judge Pentheus in a negative manner which is further reinforced by Teiresias' declaration that Pentheus is 'a peril to the state'. Pentheus' hubristically motivated ideas surrounding Dionysian Worship are peppered with highly emotive language and accusatory statements to further emphasise his lack of rationality in his clearly-emotion-based assumptions of the 'forgiener'.

'To look is no great task' as stated through the character of Cadmus, yet the notion of ones blindness is the catalyst to such 'misery'. Pentheus, in his widely overt and dramatic address concerning the outrage 'inside [his] walls' brought about by 'Bacchic mysteries', reveals that his emotions towards Dionysus are revealing his repressed sexuality that he is yet to acknowledge. Such description of 'golden hair' 'flowing in scented ringlets' depict the allure of Dionysus in the eye's of Pentheus. Whilst this ignorant depiction of Dionysus is evident through the fact that Pentheus has not yet seen or met Dionysus, Euripides utilises sexually connoted imagery of 'scented ringlets' and 'enticing young girls' to demonstrate Pentheus' inner sexual desires of which one being 'illuminated' by Dionysus and his 'charm'. This description hidden within Pentheus' speech shows his lack of awareness of this repressed nature; a facet of himself of which lures him into the 'trap' of Dionysus. Though Pentheus is chiefly the character to display such a lack of awareness, Euripides highlights the nature of his Mother Agave and how her own prideful nature allows her to 'boast' of the murder of her son. Though 'stung' with the 'maddening trance' of Dionysus, Euripides shows the extent to which an individual can be blinded into committing acts of 'wretchedness' such as was Pentheus' lack of acknowledgement of both Dionysus and his own dual nature. With the use of exclamation marks proceeding 'sight intolerable' and 'pitiful hands' Euripides emphasises the sheer anguish felt by Cadmus upon witnessing Agaves' act. The form of passage there, with the conversation between Agave and Cadmus and the altering views of the situation one after each other, the extent to Agave's blindness is emphasized to the audience of whom is shocked of the content before their eyes. The tragedy of such blindness is in the ironic statement of Agave as she notes that her 'mind is somehow clearer than before' yet the act is already done.

As such, through the events of *The Bacchae*, the power of the gods is emphasised, yet their ability to 'pursue justice' is presented to the audience for them to make up their own opinion. Dionysus, from the beginning of the play, was emotionally fuelled by the revenge for his Mother Semele and it is by this personal vendetta that he wreaks havoc on the town of Thebes and 'destroy[s] the house of Cadmus'. Through the pitiful nature of Cadmus' situation of having to acknowledge the 'intolerable' 'sight' of the supposed 'splendor' of Agaves actions, the audience is made to feel a sense of sorrow and sympathy as pathos is triggered further by Agaves realisation of her 'deed'. As such, the punishment, though accepted by Cadmus as 'justice' such notion of such consequences of Dionysus are stated to be too far. Dionysus, though a god, was fuelled by hubris of which blinded his better judgement. Parrelling the nature of Pentheus and Dionysus, Euripides shows that no one is free from influence of such flaws, yet all must 'bow' to the gods of whom posses power beyond 'mortal' limits.

Euripides displays that if one is blind, one is unable to note both the duality of themselves as well as the emmence power of the gods. As such, such 'folly of fools' is bound 'to end in pain'.