

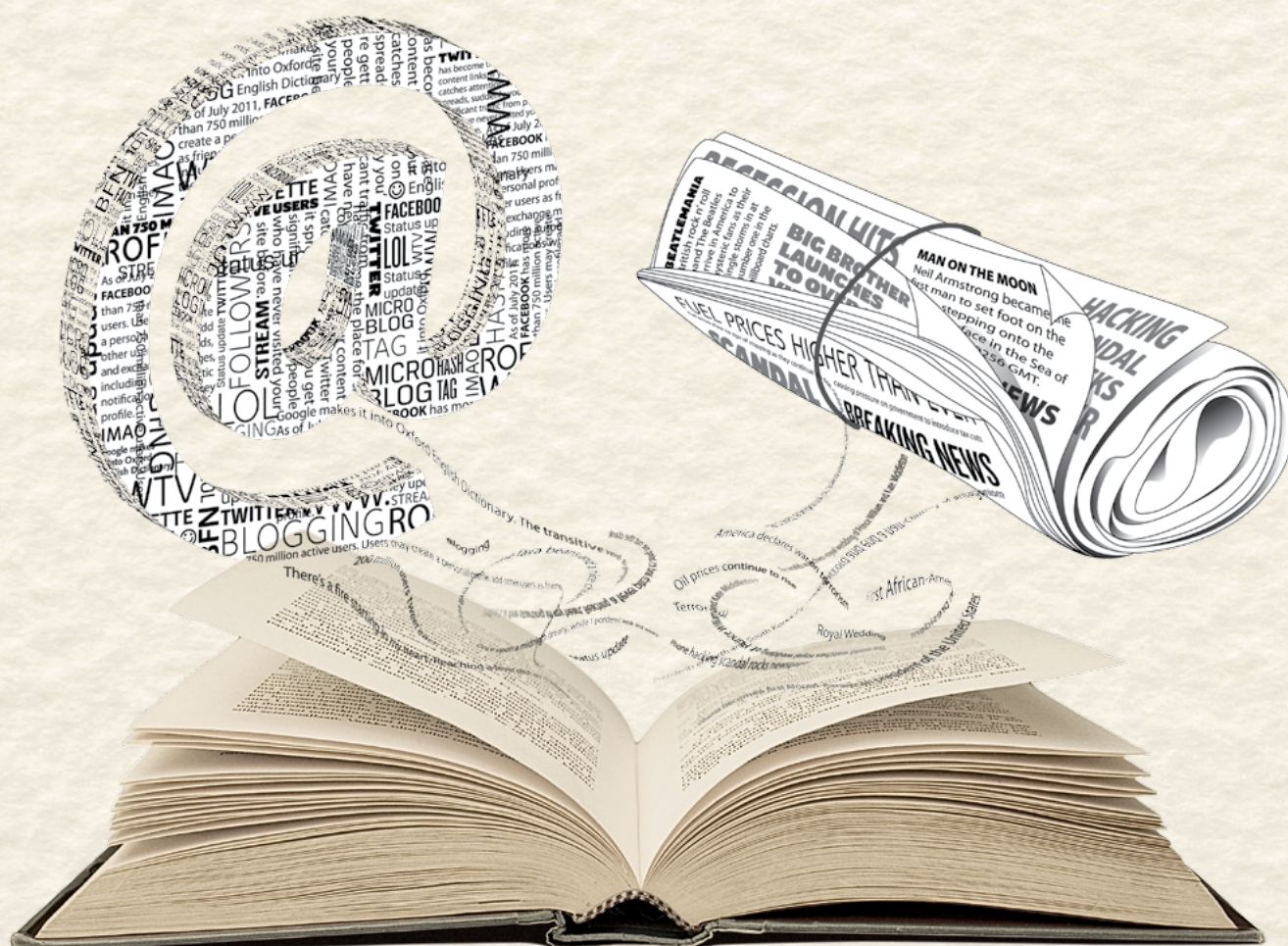
LIVING TEXTS

LEVEL 1/2 CERTIFICATE (J945)

Unit B931 'Analysing Texts'

Exemplar responses and moderator commentaries June 2014

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CONTENT

Introduction	3
Script A, Band 3, Mark 28	4
Script B, Band 3, Mark 28	6
Script C, Band 1, Mark 38	8
Script D, Band 5, Mark 20	11



INTRODUCTION

OCR has produced these exemplar answers to support teachers in interpreting the assessment criteria for the B931 Unit of the Living Texts specification and to give some idea of the range of tasks and texts being used by Centres in this relatively new specification.

There are four scripts, exemplifying successful approaches to a variety of texts, which all fall in bands 1-5 of the Assessment Criteria. They show some of the ways in which texts may be chosen for detailed study and analysis.

Each is accompanied by a brief comment to indicate the addressed level of response within a mark band.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.



SCRIPT A

Question:

How did you interpret the poem 'Absolutely Nothing' by Osoanon Nimuss? Compare to another poem by the author.

Answer:

The poem centres on a boy whose life is documented by four poems in the duration of 'Absolutely Nothing'. For every stanza his life has moved on to a later stage of his life, moving from primary school to college where the poem (and his life) abruptly ends with suicide.

One of the most prominent features is the paper he writes his poems on, as his life deteriorates so does the paper. For the earlier stages of his life where depression hasn't yet taken over his life he first writes on "a yellow piece of paper with green lines" and "a piece of paper with blue lines" but as he starts growing older he writes his penultimate poem "on a paper torn from his notebook" and finally "on the back of a brown paper bag he tried another poem". Perhaps the brown paper bag represents the frailty of our world, where things such as people are disposable.

His first poem "Chops" received an A and a gold star. It's hung on the kitchen door and his mum read it to his aunts. "Autumn", his second poem, is given an A and his teacher asks him to write more clearly and his mum never hung it on the kitchen door because it was newly painted and in his third poem, which he called "Innocence: A Question". He receives an A and a strange steady look from his professor but it was never hung on the kitchen door because he didn't show it to anyone. The poem is structured so that the first three stanzas all mention the same things, like Father Tracy who in the first poem took all the kids to the zoo but by the third he is dead.

By the time we reach the fourth stanza we are used to the familiarity and consistency of the poems in their content although they increasingly become worse in terms of what happens to everyone and how time changes everyone. Suicide is his escape, but not before one more poem, a suicide note if you like. Here is where I fell in love with this poem, not one poem has ever had this effect on me, here is the last stanza –

"That's why on the back of a brown paper bag he tried another poem And he called it "Absolutely Nothing" because that's what it was really all about And he gave himself an A and a slash on each damned wrist And he hung it on the bathroom door Because this time he didn't think he could reach the kitchen"

It's a lot shorter than the other stanzas, perhaps it was rushed. Notice how the final poem shares the same title as the entire poem. Possibly the entire poem is his suicide note. The questions are endless.

There are no commas or full-stops during the poem. You could run all the lines as one but they are broken up in half most of them, almost as if you think it's over but it's not. Which to me is hinted at by the lack of a full stop at the end of the poem, is the story really over?

The only vague resemblance to the other stanzas comes from the A he gives himself, followed by a slash on each damned wrist, the good and the bad so very close together as it seems. He also hangs it on the bathroom door, like the kitchens where "Chops" is pinned. The last line is the worst (and best in terms of writing skills) the fact that he couldn't reach the kitchen and his happy memories captured on the kitchen door and had to settle for the bathroom where his blood could easily be mopped off the tiles is very unsettling and sad. Another of Nimuss' poems is 'Divorce' which expresses the emotions and thoughts of a child whose parents are separating. It's a hard read due to the structure of the sentences and the descriptions of pain.

The theme of suicide is present like in 'Absolutely Nothing' near the end it says "Suicide becomes an option". It follows this statement on with the last line "My heart is dead" which gets into the readers head and fills it with dread of what would or might happen.

The two poems are similar in structure, both use no punctuation and have fast flowing narrative which to me is symbolic of how life is too fast and rushed. Divorce is personified "Slowly creeping up" which makes the poem seem more relevant and hard-hitting as if a person is physically tearing people apart. In a similar way paper is personified in 'Absolutely Nothing' where it narrates the story with its aging pages.

SCRIPT B

Question:

How does the Great Gatsby present the jazz age?

Answer:

In the book Great Gatsby, Scott Fitzgerald presents the jazz age. The Great Gatsby is set during the roaring 20s and the economic boom and prosperity when everyone was rich, having big houses, nice cars, throwing lots of parties and living in the best way possible. During the time of prosperity in America, the idea of American dream was so popular and that means you can be successful as long as you work hard. Women were being much more independent at that time; they went to parties, drank alcohol and got drunk. Despite being in the time of Prohibition, there was lots of alcohol in America and people were having more alcohol than what they used to have. Overall, during that period of time people had lots of fun and a really good life but Scott Fitzgerald shows us that not every good thing lasts forever in the Great Gatsby.

As it's mentioned above, during the roaring 20s, there was an economic boom and people were either really rich or well off and that is shown really well in the novel. There is Gatsby, who is really rich, has a grand house and a nice car and throws extravagant parties every week.

"My eyes fell on Gatsby, standing alone on the marble steps"

As we know, marble is really expensive and the quote above shows how grand Gatsby's house was.

When Lucille rips her dress Gatsby buys her a new dress which costs 200 dollars. (200 dollars was really expensive at that time). This shows that Gatsby is so rich and uses his money to buy people and prevents making enemies.

Tom Buchanan also had an apartment in New York which was really high class with lots of furniture and Versailles tapestry which made it look more high class. Versailles tapestry plays a key role in this part because "Versailles" is a major symbol of wealth and excess. Fitzgerald is linking this to Tom Buchanan by saying he had Versailles tapestry in his house because Tom is an example of a rich, wealthy and extravagant person therefore having Versailles tapestry in his house suits him.

The guests in Gatsby's house were either really high class people attending Gatsby's parties to have fun or lower class social climbers who came to find connection for their businesses.

People never went to Gatsby's parties to visit him. They either used to go there to have fun or make money and at the end of the day, Gatsby was alone without anyone.

"I was sure they were selling something"

This quote shows that how people were concerned about making money even in the parties.

There was also Prohibition in America at that time and alcohol was banned but people were having alcohol more than they used to. Many people were getting rich by selling alcohol and spreading it in the city. In the parties, there was a large amount of alcohol despite being in the time of Prohibition.

"A tray of cocktails floated at us through the twilight"

The quote above shows that there was a lot of alcohol in the parties, the word "floated" emphasises on the amount of alcohol. We can also see how extravagant the parties were because cocktail is an expensive drink. In this quote, Fitzgerald wants to show the excess of alcohol in the parties and it gives us the impression that alcohol was everywhere in the parties and people couldn't refuse having alcohol.

Women during the 1920s were becoming much more independent than before, they were going to parties, drinking alcohol, getting drunk and ... in the book we can see that Jordan Baker is a golf player shows how independent the women were becoming during those years. Jordan Baker is an example of new women in the 1920s, she is really self-centred and independent. Cheating in a golf competition shows how dishonest and immoral

she was.

Women at that time were flappers. flappers were a new breed of women at that time who were different and they were very loud and brash. A good example of that is Myrtle, who was really loud and brash. In Tom Buchanan's apartment in New York she kept saying Daisy's name and the way she acted made Tom to hit her and that resulted in breaking her nose. The way she acted not only shows her immature behaviour but her feelings of frustration towards Daisy. Myrtle is the definition of a true flapper in the novel.

"I never care what I do so I always have a good time"

This quote shows how independent women were, they were always having fun in the parties whereas before that period of time there weren't as much independent. Women used to go to parties for amusement.

Daisy and Myrtle were two completely different characters in this novel, Myrtle was a low class woman who wanted to amend her social situation by attending parties and social climbing. Choosing Tom Buchanan as her lover could also be affective in her social life.

Daisy was a high class woman who was really weak and sad in life and she always tried to act different to cover her problems in life, she never appeared sad although she was under pressure and wasn't enjoying her life with Tom Buchanan.

"I like large parties, they are so intimate, at small parties there isn't any privacy"

This is another quote that shows how women were going to large parties and enjoyed their time there.

Cars in this novel, cars were symbolising economic progress and wealth because it was a period of industrialisation and mass production. The fact that everyone had good cars symbolised that people were wealthy and the economy was in a good shape but on the other hand, we can see a lot of car crashes in the novel. For example Gatsby's party ends with a car crash. This means that not every good thing will last forever, and that's true because five years after this novel, the Wall Street crashes and America faces a depression.

Tom Buchanan's party in New York ends really badly when Tom breaks Myrtle's nose this can also be a good example that every good thing won't last forever.

Overall the Great Gatsby novel presents the Jazz Age really well by showing us the type of women or flappers at that time, the American dream which was really common and everyone believed that they could be successful if they worked hard, Prohibition and how people were still drinking alcohol, the economic boom when people were really wealthy and the country was becoming more industrialised and the cars symbolised the mass production and the massive parties in New York and how people behaved in the parties were all signs of Jazz Age and the Roaring 20s.

Commentary:

The task has clearly interested the candidate and there is sufficient evidence here that the candidate has a good understanding of the text in the context of the "Jazz Age". Contextual knowledge is good and supported by relevant reference to the text. There are also clear signs of understanding some of the symbolism in the novel e.g. The Versailles tapestry.

Overall the candidate shows a clear and developed response with a good understanding of text and task, supported by appropriate references.

Final mark awarded 28. Solid Band 3

SCRIPT C

Question:

Explore Shakespeare's Presentation of Kingship in 'Macbeth'.

Answer:

Shakespeare's Macbeth is a play about kingship as it was a burning issue at this time. Shakespeare supports the idea of Divine Right of Kings, through his negative portrayals of regicide. He uses many tools to further his purpose: the association with witches and therefore evil, which enforces upon the audience this negative affiliation with regicide and sin. Macbeth's duplicity is used to illustrate the effect of regicide on the mind, causing hypocrisy and lies. His soliloquies show the corruption that takes place as he contemplates Duncan's murder. The murder scene is used to demonstrate the consequences of the deed, through tension and madness. Finally, throughout the play, Shakespeare's use of imagery is used to fuel the imagination and superstitious minds of the audience. In contrast and to further his political agenda, he portrays the kings positively, showing Monarchs such as Duncan and Edward in a positive light promoting the belief system of the time.

In writing Macbeth Shakespeare was responding to various issues of the time. When Macbeth was written James the VIth of Scotland had recently been crowned James the 1st, King of England. At around about this time Shakespeare's company, previously known as 'The Lord Chamberlin's Men', became 'The King's Men' officially performing to James's court. Consequently, Shakespeare wrote Macbeth with James' interests in mind. James strongly believed in the Divine Right of Kings, and how the King was God's representative on earth. Macbeth is based on Scottish history which plays to James' interests as it corroborates his beliefs in the Divine Right of Kings, moreover it deals with the theme of regicide which was a matter of great importance as it was written only a year after the Gunpowder Plot, which was an attempt on James's life.

Act I Scene I takes place in 'A desolate place' with the protagonists as three malevolent witches. By doing this Shakespeare sets up the evil theme of the play. These sorcerers are the root of Macbeth's ambition to commit regicide as they place the thought of becoming King in his mind. Shakespeare's witches are reminiscent, in the minds of the audience, of the serpent in the garden of Eden. In Act I Scene III the Third Witch predicts, 'All hail Macbeth, that shalt be king thereafter.' These words are the seed that grows into the eventual murder of the King. Even Lady Macbeth whilst counseling Macbeth, uses the imagery of the serpent as she tells him in Act I Scene VI, 'Your hand, your tongue; look like th'innocent flower / But be the serpent under't.' This imagery alerts the audience that regicide is the product of evil, furthering the idea of Divine Right of Kings. As the play progresses and the idea of regicide grows in his mind, Macbeth begins to become duplicitous. His hypocrisy becomes evident as he begins to speak increasingly to himself, hiding his inner thoughts from some around him. In Act I Scene III, Macbeth, whilst in the presence of Duncan and Banquo, says to himself, 'The Prince of Cumberland: that is a step / On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap.' These lines demonstrate how Macbeth is still considering kingship and will murder Malcolm if need be. These contrast greatly with Macbeth's previous words at the beginning of this scene from lines 22 to 27, where he uses phrases such as 'loyalty', 'our duties' and 'your love and honour'. This contradiction between his inner thoughts and his outward persona, illustrates the process of corruption taking place in Macbeth's mind, as evil slowly takes hold, hence illustrating the dangers to one's mind of considering regicide.

Another tool which Shakespeare uses to show the risks of contemplating regicide is appealing 'to the audiences' sympathies towards Macbeth. He does this using soliloquies. Through these, we are drawn into the inner turmoil of Macbeth's mind as he battles with his inner good and evil. We can see this in Macbeth's soliloquy Act I Scene VII:

... If th'assassination
Could trammel up the consequence and catch
With his surcease, success, that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all - here, But here, upon this bank
and shoal of time, We'd jump the life to come.'

By beginning with the word 'If', straight away, Shakespeare shows Macbeth's indecision and emphasizes this through the fractured and fragmented sentence structure. He also makes use of oxymorons, in this case juxtaposing

'surcease, success', again enforcing the idea of divided thoughts. Finally, imagery, such as 'upon this bank and shoal of time' is used to help the audience relate to and be drawn in by Macbeth's tormented mind. By getting us to witness his inner struggles, Shakespeare seems at first to be sympathetic to Macbeth's plight, and in one way he is. By making Macbeth more likeable/human, the audience is being warned that anyone could fall foul to this temptation of regicide, thus it's danger.

The murder scene in Act II Scene II is the pivotal point of Macbeth as it is the moment when Macbeth commits regicide. In this scene, Shakespeare addresses the many evil consequences of such a crime. The first of these is seen when Macbeth confesses to Lady Macbeth, 'List'ning their fear, I could not say "Amen" / When they did say "God bless us."' This inability to utter 'Amen' demonstrates how Macbeth feels he has lost connection with God. This cutting away from God in the time the play was written was seen as the greatest punishment. Furthermore, Macbeth's hallucinations begin and with them the beginnings of madness: 'Methought I heard a voice cry, "Seep no more: / Macbeth does murder sleep"...' Equally, in the murder scene, Macbeth and his conspirator, Lady Macbeth, appear on edge, tormented by their deed. Shakespeare uses the technique stichomythia between the murderers to portray this:

LADY MACBETH Did you not speak?

MACBETH When?

LADY MACBETH Now.

MACBETH As I descended?

LADY MACBETH Ay.'

This technique illustrates the tension between the guilty couple. Finally, Shakespeare's theme of guilt emerges in this scene. Macbeth displays his immense guilt through strong imagery: 'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand? No: this my hand will rather / The multitudinous seas incarnadine, / Making the green one red.' This image strongly plays to Shakespeare negative portrayal of regicide. The idea that Macbeth's bloody hands would dye the vast ocean red shows that his sin is greater than any possible redemption and therefore that he will never be able to free himself of guilt. Moreover, not only does this guilt consume Macbeth, it also becomes Lady Macbeth's downfall, as it results in her madness.

As we have seen previously, Shakespeare uses imagery to touch the minds of the audience. Throughout the play, many themes of imagery are used to put regicide in a negative light with associations with death, destruction and an unnatural world. In Scene III Act IV, Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth, 'It will have blood they say: blood will have blood.' In this line, we are reminded of the witches as the words spoken sound like a spell. The use of a colon creates a pause in the speech, in itself causing a dramatic effect. All these, together with the picture of blood, produce a powerful image of a paranoid, destitute and sick soul. It also is a warning to those watching that evil acts have evil consequences. Shakespeare uses imagery effectively to portray a world after regicide, a world that without a king would turn to chaos. Act II Scene IV, straight after the murder of Duncan, Ross talks to the Old Man about Duncan's horses, he says, 'Turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out, / Contending 'gainst obedience and they would / Make war with mankind.' The Old Man replies, 'Tis said, they eat each other.' This image of civil war and the use of the words 'wild', 'broke', 'flung' and 'war' will terrify the audience giving them an impression of an apocalyptic world where there is no order and an inversion of a natural hierarchy.

Although there is much negative portrayal of regicide in Macbeth, Shakespeare also uses positive portrayal of Rightful Kings to present Kingship. First of all Duncan is shown in a favorable light. In Act I Scene VII during Macbeth's soliloquy Macbeth himself sees his fine qualities and virtues: 'So clear in his great office, that his virtues / Will plead like angels...' His recognition of Duncan's virtue is particularly powerful here as it shows that even Macbeth, now possessed with evil thoughts acknowledges the importance of the divine right of kings. This idea is established further when Shakespeare makes reference to kings as being saintly, as seen in Act IV Scene III when Macbeth says, '... Thy royal father \ Was a most sainted king...' This same approach of using the idea of the King as being almost celestial is extended to Edward later in the scene. Here, Shakespeare uses words such as heavenly gift, 'miraculous', 'holy' and 'full of grace' throughout Malcolm's description of the Monarch. This image of the King possessing godly qualities not only promotes the idea of Divine Right of Kings but also supports the Jacobean belief system of the Great Chain of Being.

Macbeth is a story about the downfall of an overly ambitious man who commits a heinous crime to further his greedy pursuit of power. In this play, Shakespeare shows great understanding and interest in the human condition

In contrast, rightful kingship is presented in a 'holy' light by Shakespeare. His presentation of the importance of rightful kings alongside the developing evil within Macbeth's character only serves to reinforce the significance of the Divine Right of Kings.

This is clearly a sustained and fully convincing response from a very able candidate. There is clear insight into ways that the text can be interpreted, and there are detailed and relevant references made from the text. The candidate is focussed on the task of "kingship" and the underlying concept of the "Divine right of Kings". The response looks at areas of the play that will not have been touched upon in the set tasks for the controlled assessment unit in A661 English Literature, and has a wider understanding of the underlying themes in the play.

Final mark awarded 38. Top Band 1



SCRIPT D

Question:

How does the doctor Who episode Doomsday create emotion?

Answer:

Whilst the Cybermen and the Daleks are fighting the war, the Doctor is figuring out a way to send them back into the void before they destroy the planet and then seal the breach between them and the parallel world (Pete's world). The doctor works out that everyone who had crossed the void, had soaked up background radiation. If he reverses it anything or anyone who has soaked up any background radiation will get pulled into the void, including the Cybermen and the Daleks. There is a big problem. Rose and her family have all crossed the void before so they would get pulled in to the void as well. The doctor sends them all to Pete's world but Rose decides she would rather stay with the Doctor than her family. At the very beginning of Army of Ghosts, Rose shows us a clip of the doctor asking her "How long are you gonna stay with me? Then Rose replies with "Forever". This scene contrasts greatly with the end of the last episode.

In the lever room, Rose shouts "pulling them all in" then the doctor repeats that phrase. This indicates to the relationship that they have together and it makes the viewer think that they should never be apart. Also, later on Rose says "The old team" then the doctor agrees with "Hope and Glory, Mutt and Jeff, Shiver and Shake". This also conjures up the image of them joking around forever. These thoughts make the ending even more devastating for both the characters and the viewers.

When rose decides to stay with the doctor, the music is very tense. However, it is the same music that played a few episodes back when the Doctor escaped and destroyed one of the Cyber factories in Pete's world. Therefore, this might possibly imply that he will destroy them once more. This builds up a lot of hope which is very effective for creating a big emotional impact at the finale of the episode.

When one of the Daleks says "The Doctor will open the ark!" The Doctor laughs and replies with "The Doctor will not". This could make the viewer that if the Doctor is so casual about everything that is going on around him, he will defeat them with no worries at all. Also, when the Doctor takes his screwdriver out his pocket, a dalek says "A sonic probe?" like it is harmless. But then the Doctor replies in a mocking voice, "That screwdriver". This also makes him seem very casual about the Daleks even though they are the most dangerous creatures in the whole universe and are his worst enemy.

The climax of the story is when rose almost gets pulled into the void but Pete Tyler jumps back from his world and takes her there where she will be safe. Just before Rose lets go of the lever the music suddenly stops to let the viewer's hear her screaming knowing she is going to die. At the same time, the doctor is hanging on to the other magna clamp just across the room from rose but it is too far to help her because he must hold on. His facial expression is so emotionally terrifying when he screams Roses name. This can represent how some of the viewers feel about Rose leaving the show. At this point, the viewers start to cry because it is so devastating. This is because they are beginning to fall in love. When Pete saves Rose before she is pulled into the void, he starts hitting the wall in the parallel world where the void gap was. She shouts "Take me back". Rose then begins crying her eyes out because she knows that she will never see the Doctor again.

Whilst this is happening, the Doomsday music is playing and it sounds like a woman who is very upset and is singing her emotions. This may represent Roses feelings in her head whilst she is crying therefore, this makes the viewer feel sympathy for her.

The lever room of the parallel torchwood contrasts with the lever room the Doctor is left in because it is a darker room. This could link to the emotions of Rose and her family when they are trapped there. Also, the parallel lever room is very messy – there are wires and equipment all over the floor. This may refer to how Roses life is now she has been forced to part with the Doctor – confusing and a mess.

When the Doctor presses his cheek and palm against the wall, Rose does the same on the other side as if she sensed he was there. These actions could possibly indicate to the viewers that they are connected in some way. This

When Rose sees the projection of the Doctor at Dålig Ulv Stranden in Norway, the Doctor says “I’m burning up a sun just to say goodbye”. This shows that he will do anything for her. This is shown because the Doctor is too kind to burn up a sun for any other reason than her. This indicates to his love for Rose. She says that: Dålig Ulv Stranden “translates as Bad Wolf Bay”. This is symbolic because Rose is the Bad Wolf and it connects their past together.

The candidate demonstrates sound organisation, a clear understanding of the episode used and some understanding of how the episode might be interpreted.





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