**2022 HL Paper 1**

**Text 1 QA – A Young Poet’s Powerful Voice (40m)**

\*\*\***note**: Accommodations made in 2022 and 2021 in light of the Covid-19 related school closures meant that QA (i) and (ii) were reduced from 15 marks to 10 marks each. It is expected that the allocation of marks for these questions will revert to 15 marks per question for the 2023 exam. \*\*\*

1. Based on your reading of TEXT 1, **explain three insights you gain into the power of poetry**. (10)

**Planning – what should we consider when before answering this Q?**

1. **How many paragraphs do I need to write?**

**R**elevant

**I**nformed

**C**lear

**C**ontextualised

**P**urpose

**C**oherence

**L**anguage

**M**echanics

1. **What are the points I will make?**
2. **In what order will I make my points?**
3. **What evidence will I use to substantiate my point?**
4. **How much time do I have to answer this question?**
5. **Should I write an OP and a CP? GTTP**

**Model Answer**

The first paragraph of Meadhbh McGrath’s article illustrates the power of poetry. Referring to Amanda Gorman’s appearance at Joe Biden’s inauguration, she said the poet’s words captured *“the mood of a country reeling from a deadly pandemic, stark political divisions and domestic terrorism.”* This reference suggests that **poetry has the power to unite people**. McGrath offers context, informing the reader that part of her poem was written on the night of January 6th, 2021, when the Capitol Building was stormed by supporters of Donald Trump and the deep division in American life was made painfully apparent. The writer continues in the 2nd paragraph that poetry *“can bring people together by interrogating and articulating our shared feelings, fears, and insecurities.”* Gorman’s poem *‘The Hill We Climb’* reminded citizens of this divided country that they had much in common, and therefore the **power of poetry as a unifying force** is evident.

The article also makes the point that **poetry has the power to transform a poet’s life**, launching them into fame and celebrity. The 3rd paragraph illustrates this point. Gorman’s poem made such an impact that she has already received unofficial endorsements from Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama for a presidential campaign in 2036. McGrath also states that Amanda Gorman *“is already working on her second children’s book, part of a four-book publishing deal...”* and *“To top it all off, she co-chaired the Met Gala Ball...”* So, it is clear that **poetry has the power to transform the life of a poet** if, like Amanda Gorman, their words capture the zeitgeist and appeal to a wide audience.

This appeal explains a third example of the power of poetry. In the penultimate paragraph, McGrath describes how *“Gorman’s vivid recital captivated viewers.”* Her style of spoken-word poetry has a mass appeal. Poetry is not a dusty old art form with nothing to say to the modern world. Instead, the article suggests that **it is an utterly relevant form of expression and entertainment which continues to give voice the experiences of each succeeding generation**. McGrath describes how Gorman’s improvisational style *“turned her poem into an event, a collective experience...”* Again, the power of poetry is clear here. **It has the capacity to seize and hold the attention of an audience, to unify a disparate audience and it as the potential to catapult a young unknown writer into fame and celebrity.**

**Comments:**

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1. Amanda Gorman’s status as a powerful young voice was bolstered by her performance at the US presidential inauguration. **Discuss** **the extent to which you agree or disagree** that **a diversity of youthful voices should be represented in public debate on all important issues in Irish society**. (10)

What does ‘*diversity’* mean? It means accepting the reality that, while we are all human and share much in common, we are also different in many subtle and often fundamental ways. We life in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, secular society and **that reality must be reflected in the voices who reflect our society**. For me, justice matters. If we are to live in a just world, it is imperative that we allow all voices to be heard (young and old), that we accept difference and that we listen to each other, respect each other, and celebrate the fact that what makes us different is often what makes us vibrant, creative, and imaginative.

As a student of history, I am aware of the fact that human society has a long history of the suppression of ‘*difference*.’ In 20th century Ireland, children with disabilities were excluded from main-stream education. Gender-based discrimination was a day-to-day reality for women for the first 80 years of the history of our state, and generations of working-class kids grew up never hearing their accents when listening to politicians or the media. This suppression of **diversity** resulted in things like the Magdalene Laundries, the isolation and ostracization of the disabled and the ghettoization of urban communities. If we want to build a better Ireland, **we must** learn from the lessons of the past. **We must** not only accept but **we must** embrace diversity, so that we might build a Republic worthy of the name.

And a healthy, respectful democracy needs to embrace **diversity** not just in things like education, gender, and political representation, but also **diversity** of opinion. I grew up in the world of social media, and it sometimes seems to me that our generation can be as angry and intolerant as past generations when confronted with difference. All you have to do is look at the response when people like JK Rowling communicate their opinion on the status of women, or indeed when any comment not deemed politically correct by the faceless twitterati is voiced. **We must accept that different opinions are a fact of life**. **We must** not descend into a baying mob when we disagree. **We must** listen and we must discuss, even if the subject is difficult and even if we find the opinions expressed offensive. Otherwise, how are we different from fascists who crushed all dissent from their views or from the fanatic who believes he knows ‘*as it should be’* in Derek Mahon’s wonderful poem? **Yes, diversity of voices, from all generations of our society, should be represented in debate on all issues on modern Ireland.**

**Comments:**

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1. **Identify** **four** **elements of the writer’s style**, evident in the edited article above, and **discuss how these stylistic elements** helped to shape **your impression of Amanda Gorman both as a poet and as a person**. (20)

This a very well-written article and Meadhbh McGrath’s style of writing certainly helped to shape my sense of the personality and poetry of Amanda Gorman. **GTTP**

McGrath has crafted a **striking and engaging opening paragraph** in which she makes adroit use of **juxtaposition**. The opening sentence states *“On that chilly inauguration day in January, audiences tuned in to see Joe Biden being sworn in as US president, but it was Amanda Gorman, the youngest inaugural poet in US history, who really stole the show.”* Here, the poet uses **pathetic fallacy** to establish a dramatic atmosphere and then employs **contrast** by establishing the fact that this young woman managed to upstage the newly elected president of the United States on the day of his inauguration. This **deliberately dramatic opening** conveys a sense of just how **impressive** Amanda Gorman is. It also provokes curiosity in the reader, enticing them to want to learn more about this young woman. **SEPARATE POINT = SEPARATE PARAGRAPH**

The fact that this article was published in the magazine section of a weekend newspaper suggests that McGrath is a professional journalist, and this impression is supported by the fact that **the article is so clearly researched and informed**. The writer includes statistical evidence when she says, *“By the following day, she had gained two million new Instagram followers and pre-sales had pushed her two books to numbers 1 and 2 on Amazon’s bestseller list.”* This kind of **concrete reference** adds to my sense of the impact Gorman’s appearance at the inauguration had on her life. The writer also directly quotes Gorman who describes herself as “*a skinny Black girl, descended from slaves and raised by a single mother”* who began writing*, “as a form of self-expression, to get my voice on the page”*. Such **details** add substance to the article. The fact that it is filled with factual evidence rounded out my sense of Amanda Gorman as a **determined young woman who writes confessional poetry. SEPARATE POINT = SEPARATE PARAGRAPH**

However, this is not a discursive piece of writing. McGrath is certainly **biased** towards Amanda Gorman, and that clear from her use of **persuasive language**. There are many examples throughout the article. **Association** is employed when Gorman is linked to successful people like Timothée Chalamet, Michelle Obama and Billie Eilish. Connecting Gorman to these people in the mind of the reader is an effective method of **positively promoting** her character. This **bias** is evident throughout. **Buzz words** are used when her poetry is described as *“clear-eyed and direct, tightly crafted and accessible.”* Later, the sense of Gorman as **a young woman with ethics and a strong moral compass** is communicated when the reader is informed that *“during 2021, she turned down $17 million in brand deals and she is wary of being seen as a model or fashion influencer.”* Amanda Gorman is described here as **an admirable, decent young woman, who offers hope for the future**. That impression is established through Meadhbh McGrath’s conscious bias and use of persuasive techniques. **SEPARATE POINT = SEPARATE PARAGRAPH**

Finally, McGrath employs **imagery and figurative language** in order to add colour to her article and this aspect of her style **added to my sense of the personality and work of Amanda Gorman**. The article ends with an **emotive and clear metaphor** – *“With several decades in public life ahead of her, Gorman’s star – already high – will only continue to rise.”* The sense is that Gorman represents light in the darkness, hope in a bleak world. There is even a **biblical allusion** in this image, and the connection between Amanda Gorman and the coming of Christ may not be deliberate, but it certainly does convey a sense of her as a **potential saviour for our times**. There are other **clever and striking examples of imagery** in the article, such as the **precision of the verb choice** in the 2nd paragraph when the inauguration is described as *“a moment that catapulted Gorman to global fame.”* Later, McGrath continues to use imagery to convey the dramatic quality of Gorman’s work and performance by referring to “*rap, church oratory, religious spirituals and oral folk tales.”* This list conveys a sense of **the rich, diverse, and moving quality of this poet’s work**, and is further evidence **of McGrath’s power over figurative language.**

This is a really well written article. It is **engaging, direct, informed, persuasive, and colourful**, and the combination of those aspects of **Meadhbh McGrath’s style helped to create a vivid sense of Amanda Gorman and her poetry.**

**Comments:**

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**Text 1 QB – A Young Poet’s Powerful Voice (40m)**

\*\*\***note**: Accommodations made in 2022 and 2021 in light of the Covid-19 related school closures meant that QB tasks were reduced from 50marks to 40 marks each. It is expected that the allocation of marks for these questions will revert to 50 marks per question for the 2023 exam. \*\*\*

**Q:** Some students believe that the study of poetry should be an optional rather than a compulsory element of the Leaving Certificate English course. Write **an open letter**, to be published on a **popular social media platform**, to **encourage discussion** on this topic. In your open letter you should:

1. **explain** what, if any, **value you found in the study of poetry** as part of your Leaving Certificate English course,
2. **explore** the **reasons** **why you think the study of poetry should be an optional or a compulsory** element of Leaving Certificate English in the future
3. and **seek to anticipate** **and refute** **views** that might potentially be offered in **opposition to your chosen stance.**

**An open letter to the class of 2022 July 2022**

*‘The Leap we talked too late of making*

*Which I live now,*

*Not as a leap,*

*But a succession of brief, amazing movements,*

*Each one making possible the next.’*

 **Adrienne Rich, ‘From a Survivor.’**

**You** did it! The Leaving Cert is finally over. After two tough years, **we** can all take a breath and try to enjoy the first really free summer **we** have had in three years, before the clouds of doubt and anxiety gather in the lead up to results day in early September. **You’ve** made the leap, and I hope for me as well as you, the next step is as amazing as Adrienne Rich describes in her poem ‘*From a Survivor’.*

The Leaving Cert is, unfortunately, an endurance test, and I think that we can agree that the dystopian nonsense of the points system has taken away from what is supposed to happen in secondary school – we are supposed to emerge as educated, rounded young people, aware of the complexity of the world and at least partially prepared to cope with the challenges of adult life. I know this is a controversial point of view, but I am writing this letter because I want to tell you that **the single most valuable thing I learned over the course over the past two years was to appreciate the power and importance of poetry**.

Now, I know many of you will read that last sentence and laugh, but, please, give me a chance to explain. **All I want to do is start a conversation**. I want to talk about **the value of poetry**, I want to talk about the fact that this art form, far from being boring and irrelevant, offers young people like us unique opportunities to understand difference, to challenge our preconceptions and to grasp just how fundamentally our experience of life can be enhanced and enriched by the power and music of the written word. It is for those reasons that **I do not think the study of poetry should be optional.** If it is **vitally important** for our cultural identity to make students learn Irish and **vitally important** for our economic future to make maths compulsory, it is **vitally important** for all young people to study poetry if we want to develop a strong, empathetic, and inclusive society.

 **Just look at Derek Mahon’s work**. His poem ‘*After the Titanic’* (ATT) resonated with me because it is relevant to the modern world, a world in which we are so quick to round on people and condemn them. ATT is a moving account of the life of Bruce Ismay after the sinking of the great ship in 1912 and made me think about how we often view events from our own perspective but fail to consider or have empathy for those with whom we disagree. In fact, lots of Mahon’s poems, like *‘Antarctica’, ‘As it should be’* and *‘Rathlin’*, force the reader to think about how others view the world. In a time when so many people are consumed by self-interest, surely that is important?

While Mahon’s poem explores the experiences of others, **Emily Dickinson’s** are deeply personal, but no less important and valuable. We live in a world where well-being is built into our education system, and yet so many of us suffer with our mental health. Reading Dickinson’s poems like ‘*I felt a Funeral in my Brain’* and *‘There’s a certain slant of Light’* had a real impact on me and my friends. For those of us who have not experienced depression, these poems were educational, offering a powerful insight into the realities of this condition. To those of us who have struggled with depression, these remarkable poems were uplifting. Their sparse beauty showed us that we are not alone, that we are not ‘weird’ or a failure because we struggle. The brilliance of Dickinson’s poetry also illustrates how artists and poets can take intensely negative experiences and use them to create work of timeless grace and beauty. Surely that lesson is as important as Pythagoras’ theorem or Boyle’s law?

And then I think about the other poems and poets we have studied this year. I think about how reading Yeats’ ‘*The Second Coming’* **motivated me** to stand up against fanaticism. I thought about how reading Paula Meehan’s ‘*Death of a Field’* **forced me to consider** the wider real-world impact of my material needs, of how reading John Donne’s poems **reinforced to me** just how radically our lives can change, and how reading Adrienne Rich’s poetry **offered me a lesson in personal integrity** and the complexity of relationships.

**Yes folks**, I know many of you will probably never read another poem again. I know you will listen to those voices who only care about money and will pursue the *‘how can studying poetry get me a job?’* argument. However, I also know that many of you out there reading **this letter** agree with me. **There is certainly a value to reading poetry. It should remain a compulsory element of the curriculum at 2nd level.**

Thanks for reading, and I look forward to your responses. You know where to find me on Twitter. Enjoy and appreciate the freedom of the summer. The ‘*luxury of a child’s soul’* is almost gone...

Paul.

**Comments:**

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**Text 2 QA – The Powerful Voice of Music (40m)**

\*\*\***note**: Accommodations made in 2022 and 2021 in light of the Covid-19 related school closures meant that QA (i) and (ii) were reduced from 15 marks to 10 marks each. It is expected that the allocation of marks for these questions will revert to 15 marks per question for the 2023 exam. \*\*\*

(i) Based on your reading of both Extracts 1 and 2 of TEXT 2, **explain** **three insights** you gain into the

**power of music**. Support your answer with reference to the text. (10)

Both Tom Gatti and Ben Okri love music. Their writing conveys a deep appreciation for the power of that artform. For example, the writers agree that **a loved piece of music has the power to act like a close friend, staying with you throughout life’s journey, and offering comfort when needed.** Gatti puts this idea succinctly when he observes that albums *“are faithful companions, with us from the first time we lower the needle to the last time we hover a thumb over the screen.”* This sense of music as a reliable companion is also evident when Okri remembers the struggle to write his novel *‘The Famished Road*’, while listening to Miles Davis’ ‘*Kind of Blue’* *“helped keep me sane through the long, lonely nights and wild flights of imagination, always bringing me back home.”* In both cases, the writers capture **music’s power to act like a close friend, offering solace and consistency in a challenging world.**

Okri goes on to observe that **music has the power to become part of the fabric of life**. When a piece of music is loved, it becomes part of our identity, part of who we are. He communicates this idea succinctly when he writes that songs *“seem not to be music anymore but one of the things that shape you, like the home you grew up in or your earliest toys.”* This clever simile gets to the heart of Okri’s point. Music, he believes, is akin to childhood. It is easy to understand how our childhood experiences help shape the person we become. Okri’s analogy suggests music has a similar power.

Finally, Ben Okri’s love of ‘*Kind of Blue’* led him to believe that music has to power to capture a time and a place. He writes *“the album was recorded in New York and every track is redolent of the mood of that city, alchemised by a seemingly magical process...”* Here, Okri clearly conveys music’s apparently magical properties. It has the power to capture a moment in time, a place, and an atmosphere, and then act like a time machine so that each listen conjures that place in a real and visceral way. This is an insightful and, I believe, accurate description of **the power of music.**

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(ii) In Extract 1, Tom Gatti observes that the music we listen to has a greater and a longer lasting

impact on us than the books that we read and the films that we watch. **Discuss** the extent to

which you agree or disagree with this observation. (10)

I agree that music can have a great and long-lasting impact. However, I do not agree that this impact is greater and longer lasting than the impact of the books we read or the films we watch.

There is no doubt that music does have a great powerful impact, and I am sure, as I get older, I will cling to the songs of my youth in the same way as my father clings to the ‘*magic’* (his words) of New Order, Pixies and The Stone Roses. I am probably too young to gauge the impact of music in the long term but can offer one important insight. A couple of years ago, I was listening to a track called ‘*I just don’t know what to do with myself’* by a band called *‘The White Stripes.’* My granddad was in the house at the time and, when he heard the track, he insisted I listen to the original version. I had no idea it was a cover, but, as I listened to Dusty Springfield’s distinctive voice draw out the same lyrics as Jack White, and I watched my granddad mist over with nostalgia and memory, I got a sense of the long-lasting impact of music. It was like he had been transported *“back down the vista of years”.* He sat in my room for ages after that, telling me about the 60s, about the dance halls, the big bands, and the happiness of his youth. I think it was the longest conversation we have ever had, and that song triggered it all.

So, yes, there is no doubt that music has a great and long-lasting impact, but so too do movies. Why else would all of my family gather together every Christmas to watch *‘Home Alone’* and *‘Planes, Trains and Automobiles’*? These films bind us and watching them together at that time of the year is as much a part of our tradition as putting up the Christmas tree and demolishing left-over turkey, ham, and stuffing sandwiches on St Stephen’s day. Growing up, I watched Pixar movies like *‘Wall-E’* and *‘Up’* which I loved and continue to love as I grow and unravel their messages about our relationship with the environment, with technology, with the elderly and with change. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that both music and cinema share a capacity for creating a long-lasting impact, but, for me, books have had the greatest and most profound impact on my life.

When I was a young child, my parents read to me and my siblings every night. My favourite author was Julia Donaldson, and I still love her beautiful books like *‘Superworm’, ‘The Snail and the Whale’* and my favourite, *‘Room on the Broom’* *(‘The witch had a cat and a very tall hat and long ginger hair which she wore in a plait...!”*) Later, I discovered Rick Riordan and his ‘*Percy Jackson’* series and was amazed to discover a passionate interest in ancient mythology. Not only that, but Riordan’s books inspired me to start writing myself. I wrote stories for my classmates while in primary school (they were called ‘*The Simon Saga’*) and this love of books, of storytelling and of writing is certainly a fundamental part of who I am. I continue to be greatly affected by books, such as Patricia Burke Brogan’s ‘*Eclipsed’*, which gave me a vivid and disturbing insight into Ireland’s recent history and ‘*I am Pilgrim’*, Terry Hayes’ extraordinary novel which so grabbed my attention last February that it caused me to neglect preparation for my mock exams (totally worth it!).

So, yes, there is no doubt that music, cinema, and books all share a capacity for creating a great and long-lasting impact. However, for me, books win every time.

**Comments:**

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(iii) **Identify** four elements of Ben Okri’s **writing style**, evident in Extract 2, and **discuss** how **effectively these stylistic elements are employed** to craft a **lyrically beautiful and engaging piece of personal writing**. Support your answer with reference to Extract 2 of TEXT 2. (20)

**Ben Okri is a talented and engaging writer**. This piece has a lovely, clear **structure** and is bookended by a clever, engaging opening and a memorable, resonant conclusion. These qualities are fundamental to all good writing. The piece opens with the line *“There are some rare albums that seem to lift from their physical condition and become part of the decor and mood of a life.”* This is a carefully constructed opening line, clearly designed to stimulate the curiosity of the reader. The statement is bold, assertive, and imperative. The line is designed to force the reader to ask questions, specifically, *‘what albums is the author referring to?’* This encourages the reader to continue reading, making the opening engaging. The conclusion is similarly carefully crafted. The writer concludes by saying *“all the music I need is playing in me, in a spiritual, kind of blue way.”* This ending, with its pun on the Miles Davis album, is memorable and reiterates the point of the article – that music is powerful. This is a clever way to conclude the article and confirms the impression of Okri **as an engaging personal writer.**

**Separate point = separate paragraph**

Of course, personal writing has to feel authentic, and there is no question that Okri’s piece possesses this quality. He adopts a **confessional and honest approach** throughout. For example, the 2nd paragraph ends with the observation, at 17, he “had to decide what I wanted to do with my life.” Later, he explains that “I have always been an obsessive listener of music, and would inscribe a piece into my being if it spoke to me that deeply” and speaks openly and honestly of the impact of the “clear and melodious” music, which, he says, was “wreathed with an impressionistic silvery melancholy and muted joy.” These words all have a ring of **truth**. They all feel **sincere** and that is a **fundamental requirement of compelling personal writing**. The work must feel **honest**, and Okri succeeds in achieving this quality through adopting a deliberately confessional tone.

That honesty is reinforced by the author’s use of **anecdotes**. These little stories add greatly to the quality of any piece of personal writing, offering concrete evidence in support of the points being made. There are numerous examples, and among the most striking is the description in the 2nd and 3rd paragraphs of “a rainy morning in Lagos... That day there was Miles and Mozart and the rain and the smells and muted sounds of the ghetto where we had temporarily found ourselves.” The description here is sensual, appealing as it does to the olfactory, aural, and visual senses. It is as if, through the power of the writer’s description and the precision of the anecdote, he has brought us to that seminal moment, allowing us as readers to understand the impact that musing has had on his life.

That power of description and the **adroit use of aesthetic language** certainly adds to the **lyrical beauty** of the piece. The opening paragraph contains a vivid beautiful **simile**. In an effort to explain the importance of Miles Davis’ album ‘Kind of Blue, he says “very rarely does it become an invisible fact of a life, woven into it like clouds in the sky, or trees along a road.” This image is beautiful and clear, communicating the sense of the album as part of the fabric of his life. There are other examples of this lyrical beauty in the piece. In the 6th paragraph his **inventive noun-adjective combination** evokes “this heartfelt cool breeze on the hot skins of those who walked the narrow paths of the cities” and, in the 9th paragraph he again uses **simile** this time combined with **sibilance** and **alliteration**) to describe Davis’ playing “like limpid poetry, clear and melodious, wreathed with an impressionistic silvery melancholy and muted joy.” **These examples offer proof of Ben Okri’s command over aesthetic language which, when combined with his use of anecdote, a confessional tone and a clear structure, results in a thoroughly engaging piece of personal writing.**

**Comments:**

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**QUESTION B – 40 Marks**

You have been invited to contribute to a podcast series entitled, The Music Playing in Me. The series

will explore the importance of music in the lives of individuals. Write the text for the podcast in which you:

1. **reflect** on the **importance of music in your life**
2. **discuss** some of the **particular pieces of music** (songs, albums, etc.) that make up the soundtrack to your own life
3. **share** the thoughts and **feelings this music evokes** in you

**PERSONAL WRITING TASK**

\*\*\*Often, when writing sample answers to these tasks, I pretend to be one of you, a leaving certificate student. However, this task requires really honest personal writing, so what follows is all me!

Anybody who listens to a Podcast called *‘The Music Playing in Me’* has to have a real love and passion for music. When I was asked to make my contribution for tonight’s show, I was both excited and worried...how on earth do I condense the impact music has had and continues to have on my life? How do I communicate the feelings it evokes in me without sounding trite and clichéd?

I’m not from a musical family, but I grew up in the 80s, when there was a richness and a diversity to popular music that meant everybody I knew was ‘into’ some band or genre of music. An early memory is being fascinated by the Rockers (into 50s Rock ‘n’ Roll) and the Mods. The Mods were into *The Jam* andPaul Weller and *The Style Council*, and they wore fishtail coats with logos and badges sewn on and, oh my God, they looked SHARP. I vividly remember being thrilled by seeing these guys looking unutterably cool amidst the throngs of kids waiting for the bus to school in what was otherwise a pretty grey, drab, and unexciting world. These guys built their identity around the kind of music they were into. Their choices sent a message to the world – this is who I am – this is ME!

My sister’s boyfriend (now husband) was ten years older than me, and he had friends who were Mods, and Rockers and New Romantics (you’ll have to look that one up, kids!). He loved a band called *New Order*, and, when he moved to England to work because there was no work for ‘*working-class’* lads in Dublin in the 1980s, he left me his collection of LPs - ‘*Power, Corruption and Lies’, ‘Low Life’* and *‘Brotherhood’*. I played those albums over and over again, thrilled by how different ‘*New Order’* were, intrigued by the amazing artwork designed by Peter Saville. And when I went into school, nobody else in my class was into *New Order,* and, looking back now, I LOVED that! This was MY band. Loving them, knowing the lyrics to ‘Love Vigilantes’, ‘Blue Monday’ and ‘Age of Consent’, made me different, gave me an identity - it was part of who I was as a young man looking for a place in the world. I now realise that most of my friends had similar passions – for Lenny, it was Erasure, for Daly, it was Depeche Mode and for Don, poor Don, it was INXS! **SEPARATE POINT = SEPARATE PARAGRAPH**

As I grew older and went to college, my musical horizons widened. There are so many songs that seem seminal to me. ‘Debaser’, by Pixies, ‘The Only One I Know’ by The Charlatans, ‘Black’, by Pearl Jam, ‘Tangled Up in Blue, by Bob Dylan, ‘Deathly’ by Aimee Mann’, ‘Riot Van’ by Arctic Monkeys, ‘Pictures of You’ by the Cure...how can I list all of the songs that have thrilled me, captivated me, and enriched my life?

Then there are the songs that educated me and taught me to think about the world outside of my own little bubble. Billy Holiday’s ‘Strange Fruit’, ‘Sheep’ by The Housemartins, ‘Ohio’ by CSNY, Marvin Gaye’s ‘What’s Going On’, The Dubliners’ ‘The Town I Loved So Well’, ‘Don’t Believe the Hype’ by Public Enemy and Dylan’s unbelievable, angry, and plaintive ‘The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll.’ **These songs are the soundtrack to my life.** They have helped form my view of society, fed my passion for storytelling, and forced me to look at this crazy world from many and varying perspectives.

And then, listeners, there are the albums that I listen to, from the first track to the last, over and over again because they are simply beautiful. Music, more immediately than anything else in my life, has the power to remind me of how wonderful human beings can be. I can never listen to The Beatle’s ‘Abbey Road’ and not be mesmerised by the sheer imagination and originality of that masterpiece. The same is true for ‘Kind of Blue’ and ‘Blue Train’, two albums that are proof of the genius of their creators, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane. I doubt I will ever hear a piece of music a beautiful as Mozart’s ‘Requiem’. I listen to it every few weeks, especially when things are tough, and the world does that thing where it feels like it is closing in. Ironic, isn’t it, that a piece of funeral music is my go-to album when I need reminding of the wondrous beauty and magnificence of this life and this world?

So, there you go – this series of podcasts is intended to explore the importance of music in our lives. Just preparing for this recording and listening back to some of the tracks and albums I have discussed tonight reminded me of the central role it has played and continues to play in mine...and I haven’t even mentioned ‘On Raglan Road’, or Janis Joplin, or Carol King, or... (fade out, to the sound of the opening bars of ‘I am the Resurrection’...).

**Comments:**

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**Text 3 QA – The Powerful Voice of Books (40m)**

\*\*\***note**: Accommodations made in 2022 and 2021 in light of the Covid-19 related school closures meant that QA (i) and (ii) were reduced from 15 marks to 10 marks each. It is expected that the allocation of marks for these questions will revert to 15 marks per question for the 2023 exam. \*\*\*

1. Based on your reading of TEXT 3, explain three insights you gain into the power of books.

Support your answer with reference to the text. (10)

Unfortunately, this extract offered me an insight into how divisive books can be. The writer vividly describes the Nazi burning of books as “Their revenge on learning. This was their chance to step outside received wisdom and take part in a glorious act of self-vandalism.” This shocking description shows how books can become the focus of hate. The fact that they contain original thought, the fact that books often challenge the status quo and the fact that they might shine a light on ignorance or discrimination, can make books powerfully divisive. As a student of history, I am aware of the violent reaction of the Catholic Church when the bible was first translated into the vernacular, and I am also aware of the impact of the fatwa on Salman Rushdie’s life that was published after the publication of his book ‘The Satanic Verses.’ This extract confirms that books which contradict, and challenge beliefs can be the source of great social division.

However, the piece also makes it clear that books can also be a powerful source of light in dark times. Hugo Hamilton makes this point succinctly when he writes “By rescuing this single volume from the fire, he set in motion a quiet wave of resistance.” Clearly, the author believes that books, and the ideas they contain, can offer strength and comfort in difficult times. In this piece, the point is that the survival of one book was part of a resistance brutality and the ignorance of the Nazi regime. So, it is clear that books can be inspirational and can help us cope with difficult times.

Finally, the article makes it clear that books have the power to capture the great variety and richness of human existence. In the penultimate paragraph, they are described as “human thought roads...” In an earlier chapter, the Nazis are described burning books as they “railed against filth in literature, against sexual freedom, against capitalism...” Here, the capacity of books to explore the many and varied strands of humanity is evident, as indeed is their power to give a voice to people of all different backgrounds, opinions, and lifestyles. This is what made the Nazis fear book. They wanted to create a monochrome, one-size-fits-all society, with no room for difference. This nonsense is impossible as it denies the fundamental differences that give us our identities. That is the wonder of books – they have the power to reflect the reality of our world, sometimes telling us what we want to hear, and more importantly, sometimes challenging our prejudices by telling us what we do not want to hear.

**Comments:**

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1. In TEXT 3, we witness an exercise in censorship through the destruction of books. Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree that censorship, including contemporary cancel culture, should not be used to silence voices of protest or disagreement in society. (10)

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1. Identify four features of the language of narration, evident in TEXT 3, and discuss how effectively these features are employed to craft a dramatic and disturbing account of the book burning that occurred in Berlin in 1933. Support your answer with reference to TEXT 3. (20)

**Good story-telling needs to be engaging**. It needs to grab the attention of the reader, provoke their curiosity, and immerse them in the world of the story. There needs to be drama, there needs to be anticipation and there needs to be suspense. The author, Hugo Hamilton, clearly understands these requirements and this is evident from the opening sentence, *“Here I am, stored inside a piece of hand luggage, being carried through the departure lounge at JFK Airport.”* The background to the extract explains he *“uses a book – the novel Rebellion, by Jewish writer Joseph Roth – as the narrator.”* Without this background, that fact would not be immediately apparent to the reader. Therefore, the opening sentence is designed to provoke curiosity, to intrigue the reader. Their inquisitiveness necessarily makes them want to read on, and Hamilton has achieved a primary goal of all good narrative writers – he has his reader’s attention.

The author also clearly understands the importance of **setting** to a successful narrative. That fact is clear from the vivid and atmospheric 2nd paragraph when he writes *“It was raining on the night of the fire in May 1933. A last-minute downpour threatened to ruin the event.”* Here, the reference to the rain and the specific time when the story occurs creates an outline of the scene. The author then goes into more specifics about the scene *“on the opera house square”* where *“they had set up a dovetailed structure of wooden logs doused with fuel.”* Again, the reader’s curiosity is piqued here. Who are ‘*they’*? What is ‘*the event’*? And why, crucially, are logs being soaked with fuel? In the 4th paragraph, the writer goes on to describe the line of students passing the condemned books *“in a human chain to the site of the fire...”* Hamilton’s attention to detail, his ability to draw a believeable, authentic setting, succeeds in dramatizing a disturbing scene.

That unsettling quality is further emphasized by the writer’s **characterisation**. The 9th paragraph contains a particularly memorable piece of character description as the author writes *“The faces of the onlookers were lit up in the warm glow of the flames. Their eyes turned jet black. Their lips were green. Their nostrils inhaled the pungent paper-smoke that came from those books, like the smell of burning hair.”* The imagery here is sensuous. The olfactory, gustatory, and visual senses are all stimulated, and the rabid nature of the audience brought to life. Their enjoyment of this disturbing act of cultural violence is certainly **unsettling**, as is the contrast between light and darkness.

Finally, really effective narrative writers needs to be imaginative and creative. Judging by this piece, Hugo Hamilton certainly meets those requirements. The personification of the book, giving it human qualities and allowing it to narrate the story, is an original and fresh idea. That personification carries on to the books which were selected to be burned, as Hamilton writes “A sense of fear ran around the shelves as the titles were called out. Books saying quick goodbyes to each other as they were being tied up in bundles, ready to be carried outside.” Later, he describes how “From inside the flames came the sound of voices rising in a collective stream of consciousness.” This is very clever, highly imaginative writing. By personifying the books, the author not only adds an appealing quirk to his story, but also adds figurative depth that rewards repeated reading. The books, of course, symbolise the people who would later be selected for destruction and the voices crying out from the flames are emblematic of the very real victims who suffered so terribly when the Nazis moved on from eradicating books to eradicating people.

In this way, through his awareness of the need to engage his reader, his skilful setting description, characterisation and his highly imaginative approach, Hugo Hamilton has succeeded in crafting a highly dramatic and disturbing account of the book burning that occurred in Berlin in 1933.

**Comments:**

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**Text 3 QB – The Powerful Voice of Books (40m)**

\*\*\***note**: Accommodations made in 2022 and 2021 in light of the Covid-19 related school closures meant that QB tasks were reduced from 50marks to 40 marks each. It is expected that the allocation of marks for these questions will revert to 50 marks per question for the 2023 exam. \*\*\*

It is 2033 and you are the editor of an internationally distributed newspaper. A book burning event, similar to that described in TEXT 3, has occurred in a major American city. You believe that respect for **books of all kinds is vital to democracy** and are horrified by this assault on them. Write an **editorial** in which you:

1. **give** **your response** to this incident
2. **warn your readers** of the dangers inherent in attacking books in this way and
3. **urge them to engage** in peaceful protest against this and any other form of censorship.

Adopt a persona – pretend be someone else

Thesis required – dictated by the wording of Q

Audience awareness

CLARITY OF EXPRESSION - LANGUAGE

Expectation of emotive language:

* Buzz words
* The conscience factor
* Flattery
* Anecdotes

Evidence-based approach

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**The Darkness Approaches**

This newspaper believes that the recent book burnings at the University of Wyoming must be met with forceful protest by all citizens who believe in civil rights and democracy.

*“False face doth hide what the false heart doth know.”* Have **you** ever heard that line before? If not, I’m sure you can take a guess at who wrote it? It comes from William Shakespeare’s ‘*Macbeth’*, a play which goes to the very heart of the **evil** and **cruelty** of which man is capable. It captures the deceit and the duplicity that always accompanies **evil**, and how those that wish to do **us** **harm** often specialise in pretending that they are **our** saviours. Readers, **we** live today in a world in **crisis**. The climate emergency has combined with the boom-box for radical conspiracy theories that is the internet to create perfect conditions for **intolerance and fascism** to prosper. **It is time** that **we** as a society really think about what matters to **us**. **It is time** that we as a society think about why books were burned in the past and why this practise is now reborn in the modern world.

This newspaper was first published in 1882. Over the last 150 years, it has been a platform for discussion, a channel through which different voices have been heard, and different opinions aired. During that long history, **our editorial board** have encountered much criticism for allowing controversial and sometimes even offensive opinions to be aired on all sorts of issues, from migration, to education, to equal rights. It has always been our stance that readers need to hear voices from across the spectrum of opinion if they are to make informed decisions about important issues. It has always been our stance that disagreement fosters compromise and that **compromise is a vital ingredient if our modern, liberal, inclusive society is to prosper**. What do **these book burnings**, and the support they have garnered on social media mean for a newspaper like ours? **Are we to shut out the voices we don’t want to hear**? **Are we to risk having our publication burned publicly and our employees threatened and intimidated if we do not? Is that the kind of society we want?**

Just look at the historical precedents. In the **17th century**, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church burned copies of books by **Galileo and Copernicus** because they contradicted the Biblical view that the Earth is the centre of the Universe. Burning those books did not stop scientific progress. Instead, the authorities who ordered the action are now viewed by history as **ignorant and unenlightened.** In the 1920s and 1930s, when the twin **monsters** of fascism and Soviet Communism rose out of the ashes of the 1st World War, **books fed bonfires from Berlin to Moscow, from Rome to Mississippi.** These books were burned because they were written by Jews, or because they advocated the end of legalised discrimination, or because they challenged traditional attitudes. The racists and the fascists, the totalitarian Nazis and the totalitarian Soviets all burned books. **These examples illustrate the dangers of burning books, and the Holocaust in particular shows what happens when a society allows intolerance, ignorance, and hatred to take hold.**

This newspaper stands for freedom of speech. It stands for civil rights. It stands for tolerance. Yes, we are all different. Yes, others will and do voice opinions which are loathsome to us, and which offend us. However, today, this newspaper stands forcefully against the hatred of book burning and stands determinedly in defence of civil liberties. We are one voice. We are lucky to have you, our readers, who, in your hundreds of thousands, also have a voice. We urge you to use it. We urge you to action. We urge you to mobilise. Email your local representatives. Organise petitions. Attend street protests. Show your strength. Show your determination to defend your rights. Remember, if you accept that your fellow citizen can be denied rights because of their views, it will not be long before your voice is similarly suppressed.

Think of Emily Dickinson and what she added to the world. Think of Salman Rushdie, of Cervantes, of Yeats, of Edward R Murrow, of George Orwell and Amanda Gorman. And, yes, think of Shakespeare, who lived in a world in which fellow writers had their septum split, or their bodies racked if they offended the authorities, and remember what he said: *“False face doth hide what the false face doth know.”* Those who urge you to accept intolerance, to accept censorship, to accept the burning of books, are lying to you. They tell you their actions are designed to protect you. Reader, they are false. They are lying. Stand up. Speak out. It is time.

**Comments:**

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