

Candidate 1

Texts used: D/F (Practice paper 2018)

Immersive, entrancing and absorbing, the way in which poverty and destitution are captured in both 'Bleak House' and 'A Change of Climate' unearths the horrors that some people are forced to live through. Both passages explore how those who live in poverty see it as a normal way of life, and those who encounter it are often shocked and stunned by the reality of the situation.

Interestingly, by reading both these passages, one can gain the understanding that poverty and destitution can come in many different forms.

The simplistic way in which the young boy answers the questions of his two visitors in 'Bleak House' reveals how he does not think his life style is out of the ordinary; "'We are locked in. Mrs Blinder's got the key!'". Furthermore, the boy seems to have accepted his responsibilities, despite being not much more than an infant. The repetition of 'walk[ed] up and down' unearths the monotonous pattern of his life. In 'A Change of Climate', a similar attitude of those in poverty is highlighted. The girls sit 'knitting and gossiping at the back'. This description could be about any group of girls, thus underlining how poverty seems to have been normalised in their community. In addition, the statement, 'There was, rather, a malnourishment that bred lethargy' unearths how the whole community is blanketed by 'malnourishment' and is a constant feature in their lives, which has to be accepted. Both 'Bleak House' and 'A Change of Climate' depict poverty as something that, for those who know it, and live with it, must be accepted, for it is so powerful, that there is nothing else that can be done.

As seen in 'A Change of Climate', as well as 'Bleak House', poverty and destitution are distanced from the reader, making what they read seem all the more alien. The narrators in both passages are not a part of the group in poverty, and are instead shown to be either shocked or repulsed by the events which take place. In 'Bleak House', the extreme lexical choice 'heavy', used when describing the baby that the boy is holding, refers to the 'burden' that the boy

Comment [A1]: The candidate indicates that both passages include poor people and onlookers and that this feature will be a focus of the answer.

Comment [A2]: This paragraph deals with the depiction of the everyday monotony of poverty in both extracts and does so particularly well with the Dickens extract.

Comment [A3]: The candidate keeps both extracts in play throughout the answer and gives them roughly equal consideration.

Comment [A4]: It's a perceptive comment that in both passages the poor people are 'other' and are seen from the perspective of those who are better off.

Comment [A5]: The answer's interest in the onlookers from both passages is sustained and here their reactions are compared.

has to carry in his life, which evokes our sympathies for his desperate plight. Additionally, the repetition of 'womanly sort' highlights the surprise the visitors felt at seeing the young girl (Charley). It seems as though they cannot comprehend what they are seeing, and this idea is emphasised by the repetition of one exclamatory phrase "'look at this!'". The adverb 'strangely' in 'sat so strangely in the childish figure' also aids to portray the alien encounter that the visitors had.

Anna's reaction in 'A Change of Climate' is a little different to those in 'Bleak House'. She seems resentful of those who have not had to go through what the children she teaches have. The long, complex sentence 'read from primers meant for children in English suburbs ... strawberry jam for tea' highlights the languid, easy life those children have. In stark contrast, the short staccato sentences such as 'And if they saw a dog her pupils threw stones at it' emphasise the brutality of their lives. The religious imagery of the grass; 'pit itself against God to survive' also reveals the difficulty of their lives, as it seems as though all the odds are against them. Anna's reaction does go further than this, however. By the end of the passage it is clear that she is, in fact, almost repulsed by the children. The short sentences 'And enclose her. Their hot bodies to hers.' unearth the dread she feels, as if she doesn't want to think about that moment of the day. Overall it is clear that images of poverty and destitution can shock onlookers, however, it is also true that reactions can differ. 'Bleak House' plays more on the readers sympathies, whilst 'A Change of Climate' evokes feelings of disgust.

These differences in reactions could stem from the way in which poverty is depicted in different ways. In 'A Change of Climate', poverty is seen to affect the community. The blunt sentence 'too many babies died', as well as the plurals of 'men' and 'women' reveal how, here, destitution is a widespread enemy. On the other hand, in 'Bleak House', it is just this small family that is focused on. Moreover this family has had to make do with what they have, using their oldest sister to do housework for them, whilst in 'A Change of Climate' all the

Comment [A6]: The candidate demonstrates a thoughtful understanding of Anna's concerns in passage (f).

Comment [A7]: Quotations for comment and analysis are well selected.

Comment [A8]: This contrast has been well noted; however, the candidate could have done more to tease out Anna's feelings of guilt in passage (f).

boys can work, 'herding cattle'. Intriguingly, in both passages the surroundings of the people in poverty are also described to be bleak and run-down. The personification of room in 'Bleak House', 'a poor room with a sloping ceiling' suggests how poverty affects everything, not just the people.

Comment [A9]: The candidate makes an interesting distinction between the presentation of an entire poor community in Mantel and the more personalised depiction of a poor family in Dickens; perhaps more could have been made of this earlier in the answer.

Examiner Mark: 25/30

This answer uses a number of helpful techniques which contribute to its success: it keeps both texts in play throughout the answer; it stays close to the text, identifying interesting quotations for analysis; it identifies a key area of interest (the role of those witnessing poverty) which helps to shape the whole answer. The answer shows qualities of perception and analysis which place it in Band 1 of the ELAT marking criteria. It moves well between passages, although the argument could be more thoroughly developed: Anna's 'disgust' is not fully investigated, and the interesting distinction between the poor community in passage (f) and the little family in Dickens could have had more impact if it came earlier in the answer.

The response has some flaws, but generally 'shows very good comprehension and close reading skills used to support a generally well-focused argument' (quoting from Band 1 of the ELAT marking criteria), and was therefore given a mark low in the top Band.

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