

Name:		Centre No:	
Candidate/Exam No:		Date:	
Exam Title:	AFA in Creative Writing	Exam Code:	WRITE 2

Question Three

In the Winter of Upper-Sixth the Classics Department offered a weekend-long trip to London. I took neither Latin, nor Greek, but my two of my closest friends had signed up, and the prospect of 'dossing' around the Capital seemed a worthy cause. After an exchange of some twenty emails I persuaded the Head of Classics to let me come along. (Afterall, this was a man who tirelessly cultivated the "cool teacher" aesthetic; he was equipped with an unbuttoned shirt, and a decalogue of anecdotes concerning such things as 'Uni-Life' and 'getting plastered'.)

As structure is controlled

On the day of departure, my friends and I observed a Niagara of Year Tens and Year Elevens board the coach. The sight of younger students – plump, pock-marked and freely-freckled – inspired a brief doubt as to whether I had made the correct decision: this was my final year; I needed three 'A's; even the coach looked a shade older than ought to have. And yet the three of us boarded; Gulliver-like, we spent the next three-and-a-half hours edging gently towards London.

As engaging range of things

None of us had thought to check the itinerary, and were thus a little peturbed to find that the weekend would be littered with various classically-themed activities – trips to the British Museum, &c. That first night in London we were to attend a performance of Euripides' *Electra*, at the Bloomsbury Theatre. The three of us were all eighteen, and did not respond well to being dictatorially shepherded by a rather portly member

Candidate Signature: _____

Name:		Centre No:	
Candidate/Exam No:		Date:	
Exam Title:	AFA in Creative Writing	Exam Code:	WRITE 2

of staff. Our problems worsened upon our arrival in the theatre, when we came to the collective realisation that *No, we could not order beer from the bar*. Having resigned ourselves to plastic pints of *Coke Zero*, we filed into the theatre, not without a spot of due trepidation.

At. words is symbol as i's voice

The *Electra* is the second part of *The Orestia*, a trilogy of plays, each concerning the events preceding the foundation of the *Areopagus* – the semi-mythical court, at which justice eventually overcomes the forces of factionalism, and familial bloodshed. The play follows the events of the *Agamemnon* – in which the Queen of the Greeks, Clytemnestra, plots the murder of her eponymous husband, upon his return from the Trojan War. Euripides tells the story of the next generation of Greeks affected by this blood feud; Electra seeks to avenge her father, Agamemnon, and in so doing recruits the help of her brother, Orestes. Tragically, the two are fated to murder their mother, and thus perpetuate the cycle of familial violence.

Written out like this, the plot of the *Electra* sounds vaguely monotonous; I seem to have described an endless loop of killing, and to have gestured in the general direction of profundity. On one level this a by-product of synopsis – try sketching the plot of *The Old Man and the Sea*, and most shall miss the point. And yet, on another

*for
very (mildly)
voice*

Candidate Signature:

Name:		Centre No:	
Candidate/Exam No:		Date:	10/05/2022
Exam Title:	AFA in Creative Writing	Exam Code:	WRITE 2

level, this is perhaps because I am translating from one form to the another – i.e. shifting from the stage to the codex.

In *The Black Prince* (1973) Iris Murdoch muses, 'beauty is truth in an apt form'; this is, I think, a part of why the theatre matters – because there are certain truths which are always and only expressible in their intended form. This is, I find, especially true of the *Electra*: I remember feeling overawed by the beauty of this Euripidean tragedy, as the titular character (an olive-skinned Classics student of about twenty, bearing a bedsheet stained with what was probably red food colouring) realised that the death of Clytemnestra would not resolve the problem of injustice, and that her years of plotting had proven entirely futile.

AP1
needed
more
on this
section

Our culture, then, needs a place where the truths of the tragedians can find expression. Without such environs, our generation may face the same fate as *Electra* – losing sight of justice, having failed to support our very own Areopagus, the Theatre.

AP1 - a long time was spent building up to the performance when we needed more of the performance itself. Still it was sustained and inventive. 9/10

AP2 - 8/10 - more focus needed on the performance but overall very accomplished and engaging.

Candidate Signature: 

Name:		Centre No:	7
Candidate/Exam No:		Date:	
Exam Title:	AFA in Creative Writing	Exam Code:	WRITE 2

Question Two

The 'Say-Do Gap' refers to the apparent discrepancy between what people mean to do, and what they actually do. While this may sound pretty trivial – a trisyllabic rebrand of what used to be called 'cognitive dissonance' – this phenomenon has serious implications upon the future of our democracy.

Strongly agree A+ ✓

In the first place the 'Say-Do Gap' finds root in one of the principle problems of moral philosophy – viz. that one very often reaches the same end, by discrepant means.

The French essayist Michel de Montaigne frequently lights upon this problem, describing the inescapable sense that things never completely flow from one's will or desires. There's something a little tragic about most of one's interactions with the putatively real world – in that however well one may mean, the universe seems to be batting for the wrong team. For instance, in *Surprised by Joy* (1955) the lay theologian – not to mention best-selling author of *The Chronicles of Narnia* – CS Lewis recalls that as a boy, a general sense that things seemed to rebel against his will inspired his earliest doubts about Christianity.

losing thread of the story?

The metaphysical problem thus described is, of course, intimately connected with the way one thinks about human freedom. In a world where social determinism has assumed a multiplicity of forms – these range from the bombardment of advertisements one confronts on the internet, to recent advances in genetic

Candidate Signature

Name:		Centre No:	
Candidate/Exam No:		Date:	
Exam Title:	AFA in Creative Writing	Exam Code:	WRITE 2

engineering – one wonders whether there is really room to make a free choice. If – as the metaphysical ‘Say-Do Gap’ dictates – one’s actions do not necessarily flow from one’s intentions, what can a ‘free choice’ reasonably mean? After all, isn’t ‘volition’ or ‘voluntariness’ implied by ‘freedom’?

Ans- well developed idea here.

In the second place the ‘Say-Do Gap’ realises itself in one’s everyday acts of moral – or political – negligence. Last summer, for instance, two of my closest friends and I had a long conversation about the morality of torture. (It is here worth noting that we had each had quite a bit to drink; and though none of us were positively crapulous, our critical faculties had certainly taken leave by the end of the evening.) While all of us agreed that torture was an *a priori* moral evil, we each conceded that we could imagine ourselves ‘turning a blind eye’, or taking exception, under particular circumstances.

reference

*and ?
needs to develop this...*

Torture is an area where the ‘Say-Do Gap’ has proven particularly pernicious. Its advocates encourage a kind of *double-think*, where one takes exception to torture because it may work, while maintaining that the practice is largely ineffective. And though no obvious solution to the problems raised by the ‘Say-Do Gap’ suggests itself, one could in the spirit of Baconian science test out the following method – bursting people’s bubbles.

Candidate Signature: _____

Name:		Centre No:	
Candidate/Exam No:		Date:	
Exam Title:	AFA in Creative Writing	Exam Code:	WRITE 2

My friends and I eventually repudiated our hypocritical views on torture, after watching a video of the polemicist Christopher Hitchens undergo waterboarding. This just goes to show that when faced with the implications of one's negligence, one may change one's mind.

A01 - $\frac{9}{10}$ A sustained, enlightening philosophical enquiry on the idea of the say-do gap - using a wide range of engaging vocab.

A02 - $\frac{8}{10}$ - Richly developed writing even if I'd question the relevance of parts of the argument.