

Upon analysis of Act One from Alan Ayckbourn's "Absent Friends", it was evident that Ayckbourn took emphasis on his title and created an "absent", tense relationship between Evelyn and Diana. He did this through the use of direct characterization in setting the scene, specific stage direction, and the structure of dialogue.

In setting up the scene, Ayckbourn provides direct characterization of ~~each~~ both Evelyn and Diana that are insightful for the following dialogue. He describes Evelyn as "heavily made-up", "expressionless", rocking her pram "absently", and "gazing blankly". Contrastingly, Diana is described as "being slightly fraught", "pain[fully]" smiling, and having "darting eyes" of suspicion. Almost instantly, ~~we are told that~~ the reader is told that the two women are virtually opposites of each other, almost as if to foreshadow a budding of heads between their personalities

and, moreover, their relationship. He then contrasts the specific attributes given to the women - ~~where~~ Evelyn is expressionless, while Diana smiles occasionally; Evelyn stares out blankly, while Diana has constantly darting eyes.

Aykuborn further highlights these characteristics with his use of specific stage direction. While he only uses this technique sparsely throughout the ~~text~~ excerpt, the direction is specific ~~and~~ to the woman's described personality and helps to develop the scenario, allowing the reader to understand the women's relationship further. At one point he directs Evelyn to give an "unenthusiastic" response - this highlights her expressionless personality and contributes to an understanding that Evelyn does not particularly care about Diana's previous comment. Later on, Aykuborn directs Diana to give an "anxious" response - this contributes to her fraught personality and reveals an uncomfortable nature to their conversation, attribute of an absent relationship.

Furthermore, Aykuborn's dialogue structure is most representative of the two women's relationship, or lack thereof. There is an ~~large~~ immense discrepancy between the amount of words Diana says, and the amount Evelyn says. Diana

initiates the conversation with a question and continues to do so throughout her responses, as if searching for an answer, a deeper conversation. However, Evelyn neglects that with her continuous single-word responses: "yes", "oh", "no". Both women's dialogue, again, highlights their initial characterization - "expressionless" and "fright".

Diana's suspicious nature urging her to ask questions: ~~ask her~~ "have you got him to sleep?", "how is he these days?", "Did you knit that little jacket for him?". And her fright personality tries to seek a comforting, more vulnerable conversation as she approaches more sensitive topics: "Till he died", "used to sit and shout at we girls", "my mother left him". Yet, Evelyn never gives in, her responses are always "expressionless", insensitive to Diana's. All of which is irrefutably indicative of an absent relationship between the two.

Olyckbourn, with his use of direct characterization, specific stage direction, and dialogue structure, captures a tense, awkward conversation between two "absent friends". Not only does he develop each ~~individual~~ authorial choice individually, but he blends them together in order to create a more prominent effect, unmissable by any reader.

Through his use of symbolism, figurative language, and textual structure, Robert Trigger, in "Lost Oasis: In Search of Paradise", creates an inviting text that emotionally resonates with the reader.

Prior to the excerpt, ~~and~~ the reader is told that "the author has travelled out of the city and into the desert". With that in mind, ~~the~~ Trigger continuously includes symbols that allude to such locations and their effect on the narrator. He recalls "turn[ing] to look back, [and] the city [was] squatting under a foggy haze", then later refers to it as "smog, morringly". To which he then chooses to "turn [his] back on". The fog and smog that Trigger describes is symbolic of the heaviness, burden of the city, ^{"Cairo under its pall of greyness",} one that he chose to travel out of, to turn his back on. This symbolic choice resonates with the reader in that it is a choice every one is guilty of - the feeling of ^{an} overwhelming

haze, and the need to ~~be~~ leave, to escape to a "brilliantly clear [,] bright blue sky".

~~The clear description notes the~~

~~experience the surfer is~~

Throughout the excerpt, Twigger uses figurative language in the form of

Contrastingly, Twigger references the desert in which he is traveling in as "brilliantly clear", "bright blue", "ultra-clear", "cool". All of which emphasizes on a ~~real~~ release of tension, an unburdening caused by the city of Cairo. These adjectives symbolize a paradise, which ~~we~~ ~~we~~ we know Twigger is "in search of" from the title.

Furthermore, Twigger uses figurative language in the form of ~~the~~ similes throughout ~~the~~ the excerpt. He compares a "floating falcon" to "an inkstroke, a precise piece of calligraphy". Calligraphy connotes to a form of beautiful writing, which is said to elude a satisfying sensation. One can infer that the diction in that comparison was selected so as to evoke the same sensation from the reader, invite them into the text. Later, Twigger compares the ~~the~~ "cool, clear high-up air" to "an inner breath of some neglected part of [himself], which neutralized the heavy sense of self, [making him]

transparent again". In that quote, the narrator is very active which reveals his internalized emotion, and resonates with the reader. Again, ~~also~~ this simile alludes to the contrast between city and desert that Trigger had previously ~~to~~ established. The "heavy sense of self" is the foggy Cairo - so smog that it was difficult to see past oneself. - and the "transparent again" alluding to the ultra-clear desert that he finds himself in.

Lastly, after reexamination of the entire excerpt, one can find a parallel nature to Trigger's text structure and the ~~text~~ emotionally liberating ~~conclusion~~ take-away from the text. The first paragraph is ~~the~~ almost entirely made up of objective facts, nothing more than superficial observations. This is congruent to the fact that the foggy ~~the~~ city did not allow him to see past anything else. Then, as he keeps traveling through the desert, he finds his "rediscovered ... pleasure of hauling

himself ~~grown~~ up from short-boulder faces". He is able to see the "horizon" and past the "pall of grayness" that Cairo lays under. This introduces the ~~the~~ fourth paragraph, which is almost entirely made up of subjective perception. Trigger is finally able to truly see past himself "like an inner breath" that had been neglected. Just like the clear blue sky, he was ~~clear~~ made "transparent again". As one can see, Trigger formulated his textual structure to ~~replicate~~ replicate the emotional journey the author was in, ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~reader~~ ~~is~~ ~~in~~ ~~that~~ ~~same~~ ~~journey~~ ~~of~~ ~~transformation~~. ~~imiting~~ imitating the reader in that same journey of transformation.

Trigger ~~presented~~ presented an emotionally resonating and inviting excerpt through his use of symbolism, figurative language, and textual structure.

Paper 1 HL examiner's comments coversheet

Subject name: English A: literature

Sample name: Example A

Text 1	
Criterion A	Mark: 4/5
Examiner's comments:	
<p>The candidate demonstrates a thorough understanding of the literal meaning of the text and there is a convincing interpretation of some implications of the text. The response focuses on the characterization of both women, with reasoned conclusions drawn, and sometimes even combines elements (the verbal and non-verbal interaction) to form a convincing argument. References used to support the analysis are relevant, but the "larger" implications and subtleties of this evidence needed to be explored to access the top band.</p>	
Criterion B	Mark: 3/5
Examiner's comments:	
<p>There is appropriate analysis of some of the textual features. The candidate successfully focuses on the description of the stage directions, and often refers back to them while examining the dialogue using appropriate terms effectively. While the candidate focuses on how the authorial choices shape meaning, it is often repetitive and does not lead to a deeper exploration.</p>	
Criterion C	Mark: 4/5
Examiner's comments:	
<p>The introduction is followed by a generally well-organized and mostly coherent analysis, with a clear focus for each paragraph. The response is adequately focused on the guiding question and there is clear progression and development of ideas. The awkward accumulation of quotations hinders fully effective organization.</p>	
Criterion D	Mark: 4/5
Examiner's comments:	
<p>The language is clear and shows a good degree of accuracy in grammar and sentence structure. The use of vocabulary and/or terminology does not always impress, but overall there is a good command of the language and the candidate can express himself/herself very effectively.</p>	
General commentary	
<p>Overall this is a solid guided analysis which shows thorough understanding and some generally appropriate analysis of features.</p>	

Text 2	
Criterion A	Mark: 4/5
Examiner's comments:	
<p>Overall, the response shows an appropriate, at times insightful interpretation of the literal meaning as well as some implications. The candidate generally uses the guiding question implicitly, but sticks well to the alternative focus of "emotional resonance" that they present in the introduction. Some astute observations such as contrast (air) show a thorough understanding, but more of the larger implications and subtleties needed to be explored to access the top band. References are relevant and support the analysis.</p>	
Criterion B	Mark: 3/5
Examiner's comments:	
<p>The analysis focuses on metaphorical language, but the terminology and the dissection of the chosen phrases is often not precise or convincingly used in the argument (e.g. use of simile, symbol, allusion). In short, there is a generally appropriate analysis but with some unevenness. It does, however, exceed the merely descriptive level.</p>	
Criterion C	Mark: 3/5
Examiner's comments:	
<p>The response is not focused on the provided guiding question. There is some organization apparent, guided by the alternative focus of "emotional resonance", but this is slightly undermined by the explicit acknowledgement of the guiding question in the final body paragraph, rendering the overall presentation ideas as adequate rather than coherent.</p>	
Criterion D	Mark: 4/5
Examiner's comments:	
<p>Language is often clear and carefully chosen and there is a variety of expressions that are used effectively and with some precision.</p>	
General commentary	
<p>The response shows some insight and evaluation of features, without the overall depth and cohesion needed to progress further up the bands. This might well be due to not fully using the guiding question effectively.</p> <p>NB: If a different guiding question is chosen as a point of entry, candidates are strongly advised to establish this immediately and maintain that thread throughout the response.</p>	