

Candidate 1

Compare and analyse how “loss of innocence” is portrayed in “La lengua de las Mariposas” and “El laberinto del fauno”.

“La lengua de las Mariposas” directed by Jose Luis Cuerda released in 1999 and “El laberinto del fauno” by Guillermo del Toro in 2006 are two films based on experiences during the Spanish Civil War. In “La lengua de las Mariposas” a young boy Moncho develops a strong friendship with his teacher Don Gregorio who introduces and teaches him about a variety of things in the world. In “El laberinto del fauno” Ofelia a young girl is forced to move in with her stepfather; Vidal who at that time was the Captain of “La Policía Armada” and husband of Ofelia’s pregnant mother Carmen. Both Toro and Cuerda aim to share their experiences and show how the main character’s innocence slowly fades away.

In “El laberinto del fauno” it was clear to be seen how War was affecting not only the main characters but the whole population surrounding them in the first scene of the movie as Ofelia and her Mother are on their journey to Captain’s Vidal Home, Guillermo does a very good job in this very first scene by using multiple soldiers and Military based vehicles to give the audience an instant understanding of the setting in this film. The first sight of innocence in Ofelia was to be seen as she meets the Pan and proceeds to have a conversation with him: “ Mi nombre es Ofelia. ¿Quién eres tú?” Faun; ¿Yo? He tenido tantos nombres. Nombres antiguos que solo el viento y los árboles pueden pronunciar. Yo soy ... soy un fauno. Tu sirviente más humilde”¹The writer uses repetition on “soy” to truly approve of the fact that he is indeed a Faun, as hard as it may be to believe. Ofelia is clearly showing that her mind isn’t focused on the current state of the War and isn’t too concerned about it, although she is a young girl and her level of innocence is considered normal for her age it eventually leads to arguments with her mother as she would rather prefer that she grows up, accepts that her fairy imagination doesn’t actually exist and focuses on reality; a cruel and hard world. (referring to the current war)

“Te estás haciendo mayor, y verás que la vida no es como tus cuentos de hadas. El mundo es un lugar cruel Y lo aprenderás, incluso si duele.”²

Captain Vidal plays a big role in Ofelia’s loss of innocence as he carries out cruel and brutal acts throughout the film, which influences Ofelia to look at the World from a completely different point of view and how War was truly affecting Citizens in Spain. Although it wasn’t uncommon for such a young child to witness such acts during the Civil War and Ofelia gives the impression of not showing any interest in the real world she eventually starts to focus more on the real world and tries to convince herself that her fairy tale stories are nothing but a lie.

“Pan: Prometiste obedecerme. ¡Dame el niño! Ofelia: ¡No! Mi hermano se queda conmigo.
Faun: ¿Dejarías tus derechos sagrados por un mocoso que apenas conoces? Ofelia: Sí, lo haría. Faun: ¿Dejarías tu trono por él? ¿Quién te ha causado tanta miseria, tanta

¹ *El laberinto del fauno*, Guillermo del Toro, 2006

² *El laberinto del fauno*, Guillermo del Toro, 2006

humillación? Ofelia: "Sí, lo haría."³

Ofelia has finally come to realisation that it's not worth risking what is real for her imagination, as the Faun requests for her to give up her own brother to complete a task that would advance her in the journey of meeting her real father in the afterlife.

In "La lengua de las Mariposas" Moncho gives the impression of being an innocent curious child having many questions in his mind, which is very effective by the reader in order for his "loss of innocence" to stand out throughout the film. The first scene where his innocence is clear to notice is as he asks Don Gregorio what truly happens after death;

"Cuando uno se muere... ¿se muere o no se muere?"

- ¿En su casa qué dicen?

- "Mi madre dice que los buenos van al cielo y los malos al infierno."⁴

Moncho has a very low understanding and knowledge of death and is intrigued as to what happens when someone dies, from his Mother's response stating that good people go to heaven and bad people go to hell we can tell how innocent he is and how innocently he gets treated at home due to the fact that he only is a Child.

Don Gregorio's aim was to teach Moncho about how cruel this world can be but also about the beauties of this world, this has a very big influence on Moncho as he is only a child and believes everything Don Gregorio informs him about, his general knowledge about this planet grows, his mind starts to develop and his innocence decreases. "Moncho: ¿Sabes dónde está Australia?" Andrés: en América. Moncho: "En Oceanía. ¿Sabes lo que es un "tilonorrinco"? Es un pájaro de Australia. Cuando está enamorado, le da a su novia una orquídea, una flor que es hermosa y muy cara."⁵ Don Gregorio's teaching is having a clear influence on Moncho and he uses that as an advantage to share what he learned with others. This displays how one person can have such a big influence on a Child to lose his innocence.

Both novels show how simple it is for a child to lose his innocence and how parents can have such a big influence on the loss of innocence journey. In "La lengua de las Mariposas" Moncho's loss of innocence stands out the most at the final scene of the film as Don Gregorio is captured and taken away, Moncho proceeds to scream words at him without truly understanding the reason as to why he is captured and being taken away. "¡Traidores! ¡Criminales! ¡Rojos!"⁶ This shows that Moncho is simply screaming words after being encouraged to by his parents he has no understanding of the meaning and has been completely brainwashed. In "El laberinto del Fauno" we can see how Ofelia realises how War can affect so many people as she witnesses the true aspect of War surrounding her, although having Captain Vidal's army to protect her she saw how brutal and reckless he can

³ *El laberinto del fauno*, Guillermo del Toro, 2006

⁴ *La lengua de las mariposas*, Jose Luis Cuerda, 1999

⁵ *La lengua de las mariposas*, Jose Luis Cuerda, 1999

⁶ *La lengua de las mariposas*, Jose Luis Cuerda, 1999

be as he kills her Doctor and the multiple people throughout the film, she decides not to trust anyone, she just can't understand how he could destroy so many people's lives for simply having a different believe. The last scene shows Ofelia's complete loss of innocence as she fully forgets about her afterlife and refuses to give up her brother in order to meet her father in the afterlife. "No necesito saber mi future". "No me interesa". "Mi hermano se queda conmigo"⁷ Ofelia has realised that what is real is what truly matters. This links back to the previous statement as to how easy it is for a child to be brainwashed and lose its innocence by just simply listening to their parents and witnessing scenes a child shouldn't go through.

Word Count: 1248

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<http://brasilia.cervantes.es/imagenes/la%20lengua%20de%20las%20mariposas%20un%20saxo%20en%20la%20niebla%20carmi%C3%B1a.pdf>, accessed on 19/12/17

⁷ *El laberinto del fauno*, Guillermo del Toro, 2006

Candidate 2

1586 words (excluding quotes)

To what extent have historical contexts and Gabriel García Márquez's own life experiences influenced events, characters and themes in the novel "El coronel no tiene quien le escriba"?

"El coronel no tiene quien le escriba" by Gabriel García Márquez is a novel which explores the themes of poverty and oppression in Colombia through the clever use of the limited number of characters in the book. The novel's main focuses, the colonel and his wife, live in extreme poverty as a result of the colonel's deserved war pension never arriving. Throughout the novel there are events and characters which clearly mirror Márquez's own life and the situation in Colombia at this time, giving the reader the overall impression that "El coronel no tiene quien le escriba" was Márquez's way of criticising and blaming the Colombian government who were responsible for his suffering and the suffering of many others.

The colonel is revealed to be a brave man who fought in an unnamed civil war which is widely believed to have been The War of a Thousand Days and is therefore fully entitled to receive a pension from the government, which he has been waiting on for more than fifteen years. The colonel goes to the post office every Friday when the mail boat arrives but each visit results in him receiving the same response;

"Nada para el coronel." ¹"El coronel no tiene quien le escriba."²

This disheartening response from the post master every week is clearly a source of embarrassment for the colonel as he often claims that he was not expecting anything anyway to hide his disappointment. Yet, despite this continual embarrassment, the colonel remains hopeful that his pension will arrive the following week, demonstrating his optimism and ability to always remain positive. There are clear similarities between the situation of the colonel in the novel and Márquez's own grandfather who was also a veteran of the Colombian War of a Thousand Days;

"La historia del abuelo del escritor, Nicolás Ricards Márquez Mejía, que fue coronel de la Guerra de los Mil Días y esperó durante media vida la pensión que el gobierno colombiano conservador les prometió a los excombatientes liberales y conservadores, es el origen lejano de esta segunda novela de García."³

Evidently, the situation that the colonel finds himself in is highly similar to that of Márquez's grandfather and in this way it is widely accepted that Márquez took inspiration from his own grandfather when creating the colonel. It must also be taken into account that Márquez experienced first-hand the difficulties that his grandfather faced from a young impressionable age when he accompanied him weekly to see if his pension had miraculously arrived;

¹ García Márquez, G (1958). *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*. Hispanic Texts, Manchester University Press, page 50

² García Márquez, G (1958). *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*. Hispanic Texts, Manchester University Press, page 58

³ El País Newspaper supplement (18/04/2014)

“El nieto solía acompañarlo semanalmente a la oficina de correos”⁴

From a very young age this weekly ritual was engrained in Márquez as it would have been in so many others waiting for their pensions in Colombia at this time. It is therefore highly likely that this routine was a clear memory that remained with Márquez all of his life and he saw his book as an ideal opportunity to condemn the Colombian government for the suffering and poverty that they forced on so many citizens at this time.

As a result of not receiving his pension, the colonel and his wife are forced to live in extreme poverty. Even though Márquez never explicitly uses the word poverty, it is heavily hinted at throughout the novel;

“El coronel destapó el tarro del café y comprobó que no había más de una cucharadita.”⁵

The poverty that the colonel and his wife have to endure is made clear to the reader from the very onset of the novel. In the first chapter, the colonel is making coffee for himself and his wife but he has to scrape the sides of the tin just to gather enough for one cup. Consequently, he gives the single coffee to his wife, claiming that he has already had his. This highlights just how poor they really are as they are not even able to afford a new jar of coffee. However, this incident also makes the reader aware that the colonel is a very proud man as he does not want to make his poverty known and he does not want anyone’s sympathy. It later becomes evident that the colonel’s wife is also very proud as she goes to the extreme of boiling stones so that their neighbours will not know that she has no food to prepare on the stove. Poverty is a recurring theme throughout the novel and it is suggested that this is as a result of Márquez’s own experience of poverty during his time living in Paris as a journalist;

“Escribe El coronel en Paris entre 1956 y 1957, pero el dictador ha cerrado el periódico en el que trabaja, El Espectador.”⁶

Márquez was viewed as a risk to the strict policy of censorship in Colombia under the rule of Dictator Rojas Pinilla and was thus sent to Paris whilst working as a journalist for the Colombian newspaper “El Espectador”. During his time in Paris, Pinilla shut down the newspaper leaving Márquez jobless with no source of income. It was at this time that Márquez experienced extreme poverty for himself which is mirrored in the dire standard of living of the colonel and his wife;

“García Márquez se encontró en una situación parecida a la de su abuelo, esperando una carta, un giro, algo que lo salvara de la miseria de París.”⁷

The novel was written during the period of “La Violencia” in Colombia, during which the press and other media sources were highly censored, curfews were in place and political oppression was prominent. These conditions are apparent throughout the novel, with one example being a sign in the tailor shop which reads;

⁴ El País Newspaper supplement (18/04/2014)

⁵ García Márquez, G (1958). *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*. Hispanic Texts, Manchester University Press, page 43

⁶ El coronel no tiene quien le escriba, Gabriel García Márquez, Arcadia article (23/01/2014)

⁷ El País Newspaper supplement (18/04/2014)

“Prohibido hablar de política.”⁸

At this time people in Colombia lived in fear and political oppression was apparent all over the country. Márquez uses his experience of this violent time to demonstrate to the reader how terrible this time actually was by creating the character of Agustín, the colonel’s son, who is revealed to have been shot for distributing clandestine information relating to the political situation in Colombia. In doing so, although he never actually uses the word violence, Márquez cleverly demonstrates the reality of living in Colombia during this time period with no freedom or rights.

Márquez also skilfully uses the climate in this novel, which he describes as being humid and extremely claustrophobic, to emphasise the restricting situation in Colombia at this time. There are several uses of pathetic fallacy throughout the novel in which the weather is portrayed as being a sickness which spreads throughout the town where the colonel lives and results in him feeling unwell. It is likely that Márquez has used this constant rain and humidity as a metaphor for the stifling and suffocating atmosphere that engulfed the country and was inescapable as a result of the oppression imposed by the government at the time;

“No había en las apenas cien páginas de la novelita ni una sola acción sangrienta, ni una sola masacre: únicamente una memorable atmósfera agobiante de espera sin esperanza, de peligro invisible e innombrado, de agobio y ahogamiento que se reflejaba, por una parte, en el hambre y la ansiedad constantes de los protagonistas y en el implacable asma de la mujer del Coronel, y por otra, en la desoladora escenografía del pueblo colombiano de polvo y de lluvia.”⁹

It is evident that during the time period in which the novel was set life in Colombia was difficult. Despite this omnipresent suffering, the theme of hope plays a significant role in the book. During the novel we discover that the colonel’s dream of receiving his pension is most likely unattainable as we find out that most of the men in the same position as him have died still waiting for their promised pension to arrive;

“Todos mis compañeros se murieron esperando el correo.”¹⁰

Márquez’s decision to include this information leaves us feeling sympathetic towards the colonel but also helps the reader to see his true determination and optimism as he still goes to the post office every week, believing that one day his pension will arrive. The double meaning of “esperanza” plays a role of great significance within the novel as it demonstrates that despite the struggle of waiting for such a long time, the colonel has remained and always will remain hopeful. This theme of hope continues throughout the novel and is extremely prominent at the end of the novel when the colonel’s pension has not arrived. His wife remains sceptical about the arrival of his pension but

⁸ García Márquez, G (1958). *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*. Hispanic Texts, Manchester University Press, page 68

⁹ El País Newspaper supplement (18/04/2014)

¹⁰ García Márquez, G (1958). *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*. Hispanic Texts, Manchester University Press, page 59

when she asks the colonel what they will eat if his pension does not arrive; his response exemplifies the contrast between her pessimistic outlook and his eternal sense of hope;

“Mierda.”¹¹

This use of strong language implies that the colonel is determined to live to see the day when his rightfully earned pension will arrive. He is clearly willing to do whatever he has to do to enable himself and his wife to survive until they can afford to lead a better life. This sense of hope is also symbolised by the “gallo de pelea” in the novel, who the colonel believes will win the upcoming fights and bring fortune to himself and his wife, meaning that they will only have to survive without a source of income for a few more months. This optimistic outlook that the colonel has on life is strongly based on the author’s own grandfather who we know waited for his pension his whole life, going to the post office every week until ultimately he died without receiving his deserved pension from the government, like so many other men in Colombia at the time. These men were victims of a harsh, corrupt dictatorship whose way of governing was to deny their citizens their basic rights.

Overall, it is clear that for Márquez, “El coronel no tiene quien le escriba”, was a way of condemning the oppressive government in Colombia, at a time when it was forbidden to speak out. Márquez’s characters and settings are clearly historically accurate when the conditions in Colombia during the War of a Thousand Days, “La Violencia” and the strong and influential relationship that Márquez had with his grandfather are taken into account. The main theme that comes across through Márquez’s writing is hope, which clearly indicates that despite the harsh reality of living in Colombia at this time, Márquez believes that having eternal hope and determination was the way in which many Colombians survived this time. As a result of the strong emphasis that Márquez places upon “la esperanza”, the ambiguous ending to the novel leaves the reader hoping that, unlike Márquez’s own grandfather, the determined colonel will live to see the victorious day when his long awaited pension will finally arrive or the cockerel will succeed and offers hope to Colombians and all of the citizens worldwide who are unfortunate victims of oppression and corruption.

¹¹ García Márquez, G (1958). *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*. Hispanic Texts, Manchester University Press, page 92

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Commentary on candidate evidence

The candidate evidence contained in this pack has achieved the following marks for the coursework assessment task.

Candidate 1

The candidate was awarded **12 marks**.

Content

The candidate has chosen a title which outlines the focus of the analysis and which should generate an evaluative approach. Equally, the sources chosen should provide more than adequate material to support analysis. Unfortunately, the candidate has difficulty analysing and comparing the two main sources, producing a somewhat groundless analysis and failing to compare the two sources in any consistent manner. Although he does recount a number of episodes from both sources, he does attempt to go beyond a merely informative approach but shows some misunderstandings of the focus of the study, with very little attempt to compare the two main sources until the first words - *Both novels show* – of the final paragraph.

Style

The candidate has chosen to include quotations which do not always support the arguments presented, for example Ofelia's conversations with the Faun in paragraphs 2 and 3 and Moncho's conversation about Australia which is described as demonstrating how his innocence decreases. The candidate does not always maintain an appropriate register, referring to the film-maker as '*Guillermo*' and using expressions like '*he does a very good job*', '*he gets treated*', etc. He has difficulty using critical terminology. There are numerous instances of poor English expression and punctuation which on occasion make the meaning unclear and incorrect use of capital letters throughout.

Organisation

The candidate writes without a clear structure which impacts on communication. The writing lacks coherence in places, something which definitely detracts from the overall impression. He has difficulty presenting arguments and fails to draw any meaningful conclusion.

Candidate 2

The candidate was awarded **27 marks**.

Content

The candidate has chosen a title which makes clear the focus of the analysis and has chosen sources which work well together and clearly support that analysis. She takes an analytical approach with reasoned and relevant arguments and consistently demonstrates an understanding of the focus of the study. There is perhaps too much recounting of events, particularly with relation to the pension, and it is somewhat unfortunate that quotation 3 on page 1 essentially gives the answer to part of the question posed in the title, rather than leaving this to the conclusion.

Style

The candidate presents detailed evidence from sources to support the conclusions made. She has included a range of appropriate quotations from the sources consulted and uses a range of critical terminology – *this highlights; a recurring theme; which is mirrored in; Márquez cleverly demonstrates; pathetic fallacy; metaphor*, etc. The candidate maintains an appropriate register throughout although she should have referred to the author as ‘García Márquez’ not ‘Márquez’.

Organisation

The candidate writes in a well organised and structured way and has produced a piece of writing which is coherent throughout, if a little repetitious. There are some instances in which she has included what are essentially translations of quotations, thereby contributing to this sense of repetition. She presents and evaluates a series of arguments and draws conclusions which relate directly to the title and chosen focus for analysis.