

Candidate 5

The candidate evidence used in this workshop has achieved the following marks for this Course Assessment component.

Scarred

This candidate has chosen to write a creative piece in the form of a dual narrative entitled 'Scarred'.

The candidate has chosen an unusual narrative style and shows a skilful command of the genre. The dual narrative is in the form of a dramatic monologue related by two characters, Erich and Esther. The nature of the relationship between the two characters is gradually revealed by the candidate – Erich was a Nazi soldier and Esther was one of his victims. Erich is dying in hospital, still entrenched in his ideologies and unapologetic for his actions, while Esther has moved on with her life and has understood the necessity to forgive. The 'Scarred' of the title refers not just to the physical state of Erich but also to the fact that it is he – Erich – who is the one who has been most morally and mentally scarred by the war, not Esther who was one of his victims.

This theme of forgiveness is skilfully and succinctly dealt with by the candidate, showing both strong creative qualities and a strong degree of sensitivity.

The first character we meet is Erich. We are told that he is on his 'death bed' and is 'scarred' and 'wasted'. He is linked to a machine which seems to be monitoring his vital responses. He is thinking back to when he was 18, 'young and fit' and 'ready to serve my country'.

The candidate makes skilful use of language to implicitly refer to the Jewish people, described by Erich as a 'plague'. This imagery is continued with the reference to the fact that he saw his ideology as offering 'Promises of a cure'. Confident use of imagery is again exemplified with reference to this ideology as 'an engine of development' and this helps to start to build up our perception of Erich as an unsympathetic character.

At this point the candidate tells us that the 'machine picked up speed' and throughout Erich's monologue the machine he is hooked up to acts as both a literal and metaphorical device. We are told that 'The machine picked up speed' as 'promises of a cure' were made – a metaphor for the rise to power of the Nazi regime. This skilful use of linguistic feature creates a strong impact on the reader.

Erich goes on to describe the allure of the Nazi party for him: 'we needed them and they needed us in order to make our country great again. Who would deny an answer to their problems?' Again, there is reference to an 'illness' which Erich felt his ideology could cure. The single word sentence 'Freedom' shows what Erich felt these beliefs offered him and this staccato structure is repeated throughout his monologue, serving to further emphasise the cold-blooded monstrosity of his actions: 'I threw them into pits, made them work and made

them suffer'. The word 'freedom' here is a positive word which has had its true meaning distorted and twisted, mirroring this character's mindset.

Further evidence of Erich's warped sense of morality is shown when he recalls a specific victim – 'one of the vermin' – who left a scar on his face and who he shot immediately in revenge. Erich always felt that right was on his side: 'Their death was good'. He saw his actions as positive: 'I helped restore justice to our country' and he further describes 'the ones who deny their actions, who deny their involvement' as 'weak'.

The candidate has shown considerable control and skill in his depiction of Erich as a ruthless murderer. His character can even find self-justification for his escape from the law: 'I fled. Not out of weakness but by force. I couldn't be in my great country and watch it slowly die.'

Erich recalls how even as an ordinary citizen he clung to his beliefs and hatreds. This is symbolically represented by the fact that 'The machine sped on'.

As he contemplates his imminent death, the 'beeping' of the machine almost acts as a form of punctuation – the three 'beeps' between the rhetorical questions he asks acting almost as ellipsis and when he reveals that he is empathetically unapologetic for his actions with the dramatic 'No', we are told that, 'the machine stopped'.

The depiction of Erich is skilfully controlled and creates a strong impact.

The second character – Esther – is then introduced. Her character acts as a counterpoint to Erich: where his is speech staccato and cold, her narrative is much more extensive and engaging.

Esther's monologue begins with her memory of her father being taken away before she was removed by 'The blue eyed monsters'.

The candidate here nicely mirrors Erich's monologue, with Esther acknowledging: 'they blamed us for the fall of the country and blamed us for the problems that we too suffered'.

The contrast between the mindset of the two characters is rather nicely summed up in Esther's one sentence paragraph: 'They had been brainwashed' and indeed the character of Esther shows understanding and perhaps even a degree of compassion towards Erich.

The link between Esther and Erich is hinted at by the reference to the 'yellow star', again showing the confidence and control of narrative which this candidate skilfully displays. The context of the events referred to in the monologues is revealed subtly and implicitly.

Esther recalls the horror of what she witnessed: 'Shaved. Stripped. Silenced. . .'

The link between Erich and Esther is revealed as she remembers the incident where a soldier shot a would-be escapee. We realise this soldier, who was 'completely ruthless' was Erich. The thematic concern is skilfully developed by the candidate with Esther's reference to the scar left on the soldier – 'he would heal' – in contrast with 'What we suffered would leave an everlasting mark on not just us but on humanity'.

Esther remembers the horrors of what she has witnessed but has realised that she must 'educate others' to prevent history from repeating itself, unlike Erich who could not move on. This mirroring effect between the reactions of the two characters and the subtle interweaving of the two narratives shows a skilful command of the genre by the candidate. Esther's perception of an 'unjust war' is contrasted with Erich's perception of justice.

Esther asks herself if she can forgive what happened and answers that 'I must' in a clear, dramatic and emotional final sentence which contrasts with Erich's emphatic 'No' when he asks himself if he wishes to apologise for what he did. Esther can forgive and move on while Erich remains unforgiving and scarred and dies. Decency and humanity has triumphed over evil.

This is an impressive piece of writing and is placed in the Band 15-13. Strong creative qualities and the candidate's command of the genre are evident throughout. The use of the dual narrative is skilfully handled and the contrast between the staccato language of Erich – punctuated by the noises of the machine monitoring his vital signs – and the more engaging, forgiving tone of Esther is subtle and well controlled.

The piece is rounded off well and creates a powerful impression on the reader, while the deceptively simple title – 'Scarred' – resonates throughout. This piece is awarded **15 marks** out of 15.