

class. Exam BFi

Question 8: Essay 4 and poetry

"While Margaret Atwood's novel The Handmaid's Tale was published three centuries after William Shakespeare's play The Tempest, both works share similarities in the use of language as a way of asserting power over a person or group. This essay will explore how both works employ language as a tool of domination but also of freedom. ✓

Firstly, Atwood illustrates ^{through} through Handmaid's Tale how a repressive government or society may use language as a mean to assert dominance over one's self. For instance, the quote "ordinary [freedom] is what you might use to. After a while, this [freedom] will become ordinary." ✓
Through Handmaid's Tale's words, Atwood demonstrates how ✓✓✓

Language may be used as a way to assert power. Indeed, the use of an asserting tone through the "will" is a prime example of Gilad's mind control attempt. This future is presented as an unescapable outcome which will shatter women's dreams of liberty and thus make them obedient. It is thus employed as a way of asserting power through a wide collection. However, Atwood also warns the reader through this character's quote of the many ways of how language is employed as a trusted source of power. Indeed, the dentist is not merely assertive: she also tries to persuade. For example, dentist Lydia uses the past tense through "was" to qualify freedom while she employs the future tense "will" to describe the repressive society of Gilead. When, she tries to reduce the importance of an "ordinary" past while also convincing her audience, including Offred, that Gilead is a bright future. This quote is employed by Atwood

Excellent
balance
there - style -
Atwood

as a watching of how language may be used for evil deeds. In a similar way, Shakespeare also criticizes the use of language as a way to obtain power. ✓

excellent ✓

nice transition idea ✓

While in The Merchant of Venice Shylock does not openly confront his masters, Caliban in The Tempest has, sadly for him, the will to confront his master Prospero who employs language as a wicked source of power in Caliban's case. ✓✓✓
"You taught me your language and my profit on it is that I know how to curse!" ✓ the playwright openly criticizes colonialism's use of language as a source of knowledge employed only to obtain power over persons that were initially free. ✓ Indeed, Caliban and Prospero's mother freely dwell on the island before Prospero's arrival with his servants. ✓ When, the self-proclaimed master of the island enslaves Caliban, who gladly served him before realizing he was under the dominion of Prospero's language. ✓ Through the angry tone of

Caliban's quote, therefore illustrates Caliban's argument:

the language given by colonists to this new world as a poisoned gift merely reinforced the power of people such as Prospero who did not bother with compensations for the persons under his absolute

will. Caliban's furious tone, emphasized by the exclamation

marks show that his only option is to fight with a language

he does not master against Prospero, a master of words. He may

only "curse" Prospero, which will in turn pinch his body and

torment him. Thus, language in 'The Tempest' is employed as a

way to assert power over a person. However, language may

also be used as a tool of freedom as exemplified in 'The Merchant of

Venice

"While alone in her cell - room, Jessica discovers a message

written by the previous handmaid of the house, which committed

suicide: "dehete to lastendes erdumbdamm" which may be

translated from Latin as "don't let those bastards grind you down". This message will be used by Goffard to keep her unity and possibly reject Gilard's doctrine throughout the book. Chateaubriand's use of Latin here is rather queer because it intertwines a noble and powerful language of the past to convey a message of hope in a rather vulgar way. This contrast between the form of the message and its meaning is employed by Chateaubriand in order to convey the idea that language, no matter the manner, may be a source of hope and thus power over the oppression employed by a group such as Gilard. Indeed, the negation "don't" implies a form of resistance against the society and its "bastards", a vulgar word to designate and highlight the fact that rejecting Gilard's members is normal, perhaps even a duty. The fact that this quote is written in a language that used to be a symbol of the old world and the past gives hope for the future. But the use of language is a source of freedom that asserts a

form of power over a person or a group is also greatly employed by Shakespeare.

In the final act of the play, almost all the characters, including Prospero, are freed from the island but also from their guilt. Shakespeare asserts through Prospero's quote "the greater miracle is in forgiveness rather than in revenge" that language may be a source of freedom by asserting its power over other characters and forgiving them from their past deeds. Indeed, the opposition between "revenge" and "forgiveness" shows that forgiveness is not easy to be granted even though its power is "greater". The play might thus demonstrate that language can be used for asserting power over a group in order to liberate himself and other characters in order to work together and escape a prison such as the island.

In conclusion, language is employed in both ways to achieve dominance over individuals but also freedom and liberty.

for the group as a whole.

↳ expand conclusion

Community of poetry:

Charles Lovelace in his poem "Black Mother" describes how a child, possibly the poet himself, has grown to maturity with his strict and violent black mother. This commentary will analyse how the poet employs language to describe how he has matured through his mother's love tainted with violence.

Simply, the structure of the poem itself shows to the reader the poet's increasing maturity through the number of lines in each stanza. The first has only five while the second has ten and the third has

twelve. This evolution provides a visual comprehension of the poem before even reading it. Furthermore, the title depicts one of the characters that is universal to everyone: a mother. However, this universal constant is "black" which could indicate this woman's skin color but also be an allusion to her attitude towards her child. The poet also capitalized each word of the title, which may indicate that each one is a symbol of status, responsibility, and stress that may have influenced the child's education.

The first stanza is employed by the poet as a description of this mother's feelings towards him. Indeed, he uses a negation with "cannot" in order to underline the lack of visible love from his mother. For instance, her "love" is "heavy" (l. 2) and in direct opposition to the "gentle" attitude the poet expected from his mother. Moreover, he associates this lack of love "split [him] with deceitful longings" (l. 5). This image, reinforced by the dramatic tone created by "deceitful" imitates

the mother to have pity for such a child and to respond as the poet
he managed to maintain "an image of [his] delicate flesh" (l. 4).

The poet also criticizes this appearance, masculinity in society, by employing
the past tense with "once" (l. 4) and thus demonstrates it is
an illusion that shall quickly fade away.

Moreover, the poet also underlines the abnormality of his mother's
condition. Indeed, he describes her as having an "aged spirit" (l. 7) that
is "jangling with pain" (l. 8). The kinetic image of "jangling"
shows his mother, despite being young in her body is old in her soul
or manner of educating. Furthermore, this "pain" is a "secret" (l. 9)
that justifies a harsh education. The list of body "breasts; hair;
flesh; eyes" shows how his mother used her body to torment the
poet, which declares that her belief in the use of violence for educational
purposes is a "myth of little worth". This metaphor may also express the
poet's dismay at his mother's lack of knowledge and comprehension.

Despite these harsh methods, the poet managed to build his own identity. Indeed, the third stanza begins with "but" (l. 16) which is a shift from his frustration as a child to a dimension of acceptance: the poet has grown up. Indeed, he employs an image of fruit "peeled away [...] to its core" (l. 16-17) to show he came to understand that his mother's love, compared to a "chestnut" (l. 21) is present even though it was hidden from his superficial understanding. The quote "I am" (l. 19) shows he managed to build himself a strong identity, shown through the indentation of the line. Indeed, his identity is now as his mother's "chestnut" love: strong in opposition to the "weakness" ^(l. 22) she feared for him. In the end, the poet "defined [himself] through [her] denial" (l. 20-21) which illustrates the power of language which may be used as a tool of creation. ✓

In conclusion, Justice Brandeis explains through this poem that language does not have to support education in order to build a strong identity. Despite a mother's violence in words and deeds, physical and spoken language supports ^{identities} and allows to understand the world ✓