

**Higher English**

**Scottish Set Text**

**Aims**

As part of the Higher English course, you will read the novel ‘The Cone-Gatherers.’ You will then use this as the Scottish Set Text for the Textual Analysis section of the Critical Reading paper in your prelim and your final exam.

Over the course of this unit you will:

* Read the novel and develop a thorough understanding of character, setting, plot, key incident and theme
* Answer questions and take detailed notes that demonstrate your knowledge and will support you in writing 10 mark answers when analysing the text
* Analyse and evaluate the themes, key ideas and language of the text
* Plan, prepare and answer a variety of Higher 10 mark textual analysis questions
* Practise timed textual analysis (45minutes)



**Context**

‘The Cone-Gatherers’ is a novel by the Scottish author Robin Jenkins. To fully understand it, you need to know a bit about the author himself.

Born in 1912, in Cambuslang, Jenkins, after graduating from the University of Glasgow, was an English teacher before moving to the Border at the start of World War 2. He worked for the Forestry Service in Argyle, was a pacifist and conscientious objector to the war.

After the war, he started writing. His work explored the idea of humanity and what makes us good or evil. Jenkins' anti-war viewpoint was something he tried to convey through his stories. He saw war as evil caused by men who are themselves evil.

He also drew upon what he witnessed during the General Strike in 1926, when he saw miners – many of whom were his neighbours, involved in violent clashes and protests – changed by fury resentment. The character of Duror is most likened to these men as he is incited to hatred by the restrictions of his life like the miners.

**Theme**

Arguably, there are many themes within the text – **war, sacrifice, hatred, social class, religion, nature** etc. However, the main theme we will focus on in our study of the novel is **the conflict between good and evil and the destruction of innocence.**

Literally, this is a novel about what happens to two cone-gatherers while they work on a rich estate during a time of great upheaval and struggle: war waged on, socialist and communist parties were on the rise politically and the upper-classes feared a loss of power. Symbolically, the novel explores the conflict between good and evil.

**Symbolism**

To clarify the theme, the text is a story told through a series of symbols, some more important than others, and we will track the development of these as we read and study the text.

The woods represent many things. However, they can be representative of The Garden of Eden. A place of beauty, safety and serenity while outside the world is filled with war.

The cones themselves are symbolic of re-birth and regeneration as they will be replanted after the woods are cut down to help with the war efforts. They are symbolic of hope following the war.

However, inside the woods, Duror exists – symbolic of evil. He is the embodiment of darkness. In this instance, he becomes the serpent (the devil) within The Garden of Eden.

Contrary to Duror, Callum is a symbol of innocence and purity. Evil threatens to destroy him throughout the novel and the ending is often likened to the bible with Callum as Jesus.

**Microcosm**

Some critics believe the woods are a microcosm, a small version of the bigger world. The conflict within the woods (Duror vs. Callum/ Good vs. Evil) is representative of the conflict that exists in the outside world and perhaps, on a larger scale, within us all as Jenkins believed we all had the capacity to be as monstrous as Duror, under the right stress.



**Chapter 1**

In this chapter we are introduced to the brothers, Neil and Calum, who are high in the trees gathering cones. Calum is absolutely at home in the trees, helping his brother down from the trees, though on the ground he is clumsy because of his deformity.

We find out that Calum is very compassionate to animals and sensitive to their pain; he has released some rabbits from the traps which Duror, the keeper, has set. For this reason, Duror hates the two brothers (Calum in particular) and wants them out of the wood.

Duror has been watching them in **‘an icy sweat of hatred’** his gun aimed at the hunchback Calum. The wood was his refuge but now he thinks it is polluted by this ‘freak’ - he spies on them obsessively.

**Questions**

1. In the opening paragraph, how does Jenkins introduce both the tranquillity of the wood and the danger of war?
2. Read Jenkin’s description of the brothers Neil and Calum again, in what ways is the reader informed they are different?
3. Read pages 4 and 5 again, what reasons does Neil give for being angry about their accommodation?
4. Why does Calum feel at ease in the wood?
5. What did Calum do to anger Duror on his first day in the wood? (p5)
6. How does Jenkins immediately establish Duror as the antagonist of the novel in this opening chapter? (p5-6)
7. Why does Duror hate Calum especially?
8. Why is Lady Runcie Campbell managing the estate?

**Theme – Good versus Evil**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Context****(Understanding)** | **Textual Reference****(Quote / Evidence)** | Comments on Evidence**(Analysis)** |
| Neil and Calum were sitting in the dark at the top of a tree. |  |  |
|  | The owl could not be blamed; it lived according to its nature; but its victim must be pitied…..This was the terrifying mystery, why creatures he loved should kill one another.”(p3) |  |
|  | “You’re better and wiser than any of them.” (p4) |  |
|  | “Calum, demoralised as always by hatred, had cowered against the hut hiding his face.” (p5) |  |
|  | “To Duror it had been the final defeat that such ability should be in a half-man, a freak, an imbecile.” (p12) |  |

**Language Analysis**

**Setting**

In the opening chapter we are introduced to the peaceful setting of the wood and alerted to the dangers of war.

1. The opening paragraph describes the wood:

*“ it was a good tree by the sea-loch, with many cones and much sunshine; it was homely too, with rests among its topmost branches as comfortable as chairs.”*

Analyse how Jenkins uses word choice and simile to convey the wood as an idyllic place.

1. The idyllic setting of the wood is contrasted with the conflict of war. With close reference to the text, show how Jenkins language creates this contrast.



**Chapter 2**

Duror’s character is developed as we discover more about his home life, the nagging Mrs Lochie and invalid wife Peggy. Duror hatches a plan to rid of forest of brothers with deer drive.

1. Immediately Duror and Dr Matheson seem to clash, with reference to the text explain why this is so.
2. Dr Matheson also feels pity towards Duror(p17). Explain why he feels pity for him.
3. We are told: *“envy that he felt, corrosive and agonising, was again reduced outwardly to a faint smile*.” (p18) What induces this jealousy? Analyse how the language conveys the intensity of this?
4. Who is Mrs Lochie (p18-19) and why does she see a less guarded Duror, use reference to the text in your answer.
5. With textual reference, show how Duror seems to be struggling mentally with both his home situation and his unjustified hatred for the Cone Gatherers.

We learn, at least partly, why Duror is so bitter. Find evidence and explain how each of the following contribute to his instability.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Influence** | **Quote** | **Explanation** |
| Peggy |  |  |
| The Doctor’s opinion of Duror |  |  |
| The tree outside his house |  |  |
| His arguments with Mrs Lochie |  |  |
| His attitude to his dogs |  |  |

**Language Analysis**

1. Peggy is described on p20 as having “wobbling masses of pallid fat” Analyse how the language suggests this repels Duror and explain how it helps the reader to understand his state of mind?

2. Read again page 25, from “To hate the hunchback….hellish beauty.” Analyse Jenkins’ use of oxymoron in this sentence. What idea does it clarify?

**Chapter 3**

In this chapter, we see Duror spread lies as the idea of the **‘overspreading tree of revulsion’ is developed. We now know how he plans to discredit the cone-gatherers. We are also introduced to more of Lady Runcie’s family.**

1. **The lie to Forgan:**

“I’m afraid we’ve had a disturbed night. I see I’ve forgotten to shave.”

1. **Mrs Lochie’s Accusation:**

“she accused us of being in bed together, but she put it more coarsely than that.”

1. **The accusation about Calum:**

“I saw that imbecile exposing himself… and worse.”

**Task**

Take each lie and explain how they contribute to Duror’s characterisation.

**Chapter 4**

Create a summary of this chapter. You should produce a detailed paragraph with textual references that covers:

* What Duror discusses with Lady Runcie Campbell
* Mr Tulloch’s input
* The conflict between Christian values and class
* How Duror manipulates the situation and his growing madness
* Roderick’s development

**Chapter 5**

This chapter also serves as an important point for the characters of Neil and Duror. We see Neil’s fierce love of his brother and Duror’s humiliation and self-loathing.

**Note taking** – using the headings below identify quotations and analyse how they help us to understand character and theme.

* Neil’s relationship with Calum
* Neil’s anger towards the class-system
* Neil’s relationship with Duror
* Neil’s sense of vulnerability and betrayal

**Chapter 6**

This chapter is the first **key incident.** We will need to know this chapter inside out. It would be worth noting key quotations and focusing your revision on this chapter. We will look at how this incident highlights the theme good vs. evil and how it influences the rest of the novel.

1. What is Duror’s intention in drafting in the brothers to help with the deer drive?
2. What is the effect of Duror’s dream about Peggy at the start of the chapter on our understanding of his mental anguish?
3. How does the appearance of the two cone-gatherers affect Duror’s mood?
4. How does Jenkins reinforce Duror’s mood throughout the chapter? Provide textual evidence for your response.
5. How are the brothers viewed by the other estate employees? Provide textual evidence for your response.
6. ‘Calum was no longer one of the beaters; he too was a deer hunted by remorseless men.’ (88) What does this key quotation imply? Describe Calum’s actions at this point in the chapter.
7. How do Duror’s subsequent actions contrast with those of Calum?
8. To what extent has Duror’s plan been successfully executed?
9. What effect does the deer drive have on how Duror is viewed by those who witnessed it?
10. What is the reaction of Lady Runcie-Campbell to the events of the deer drive? Think about how she views (a) Calum and (b) Duror.
11. On page 92 Duror realises what makes him hate Calum so fiercely. Describe in your own words the realisation that he comes to.
12. Why do you think Tulloch defends the brothers and Calum’s actions in particular?
13. How does Roderick successfully change Lady Runcie-Campbell’s mind about sending the brothers away from the estate?
14. On page 99 Duror outwardly defends Calum to Lady Runcie-Campbell. What is the real reason for him agreeing to them staying on the estate? Use your own words as far as possible.
15. To what extent do you think Lady Runcie-Campbell’s decision to let them stay is influenced by her religious beliefs?



**Chapter 7**

1. What is the effect of the deer drive on Neil? Support your answer with textual reference.

2. How does the war affect Neil’s character?

3. How are Neil and Calum treated in Lendrick and how does this further undermine Duror?

4. Explain what happens at the end of the chapter and how this contributes to our understanding of Roderick’s character.



**Chapter 8**

1. Using textual reference, show how Roderick’s attitude toward the Cone Gatherers differs to his mother and sister.

2. On page 95, Duror hopes the doctor will prescribe something so that he can touch the ‘elm tree’ again. What so you think he means by this?

3. What does Dr Matheson tell Duror is wrong with him?

**Chapter 9**

1. How is Duror’s frame of mind demonstrated at the start of this chapter and how does this make the reader feel about him? Consider what he thinks about again. Support your answer with textual reference.
2. Explain what we discover about their mother and why Duror leaves the pub.

**Chapter 10**

1. Using textual reference, show how Jenkins’ language illustrates that Lady Runcie-Campbell doesn’t like visiting Mrs Duror. Why does she go there and what does she learn?

2. a) Go to page 117. Explain, with reference to the text, how Roderick views the wood.

b) Why does he want to take care of Calum and Neil?

3. Explain what the importance of “from the dirty hut…irradiated a light” (page 118) would be if we were to think of the novel as an allegory of the Garden of Eden.

4. At the end of the chapter Roderick realises that his own house, with his mother and sister, would no longer exist in its old way. What has happened to make him think that?

**Chapter 11**

This is the next **key incident**. It serves to illustrate the class divide and we are left feeling great sympathy for the brothers.

1. In your own words describe Calum’s feelings ahead of the storm.
2. How do they contrast with those of his brother?
3. Why do you think Neil gets so frustrated with Calum here?
4. Why do the brothers decide to go to the beach hut?
5. Why is Calum unhappy about Neil’s decision and what does this say about his level of maturity?
6. In your own words describe why Neil ‘sobbed’ (156).
7. Why does the beach hut represent ‘humanity’ (156) to the brothers?
8. What reasons does Neil give for coming into the hut without permission?
9. What is Neil’s attitude towards Lady Runcie-Campbell and her children?
10. What do you think attracts Calum to the broken doll?
11. How does Neil feel when Lady Runcie-Campbell finds them in the hut?
12. How does Lady Runcie-Campbell react to seeing Calum?
13. How does the attitude of Sheila towards the cone-gatherers contrast with her brother’s?
14. Why is Lady Runcie-Campbell so angry at the brothers’ intrusion?
15. Why is she so concerned about Roderick’s pity for the two brothers?

**Chapter 12**

1. What is Mr Tulloch’s perception of Neil as he watches him working?

2. a) Why does Neil lie to Mr Tulloch about the hut being flooded?

b) By admitting this lie, what does he reveal about his character?

3. Explain in detail what the final sentence of the chapter reveals about the class system in the novel.

**Chapter 13**

Select 4 key quotations from this chapter that are significant in helping to highlight character, theme, setting or plot. Analyse and explain the importance of each in terms of the novel as a whole.

**Chapter 14**

Tulloch meets Roderick - tells him not to bother the men. Duror brings the doll to Lady Runcie-Campbell.

1. a) With reference to the text, what is the mood of the chapter before the appearance of Duror?

b) What is significant about his first appearance?

2. Duror has manifestly got worse –physically and mentally. By commenting on two textual references, show how Jenkins’ illustrates this throughout the chapter.

3. What is the importance of the final sentence to the story as a whole?

**Chapter 15**

Roderick gets stuck up the tree gathering cones. Lady Runcie-Campbell feels it is the duty of the brothers to save him.

1. Why does Lady Runcie-Campbell slap Harry?

2. Erchie Graham appears again in this chapter. How does he introduce humour to the action here? Support your answer with a reference to the text.

3. What is Lady Runcie-Campbell’s attitude towards asking the cone-gatherers for help?

**Chapter 16**

This is the final key incident and the ending of the novel.

1. Explain briefly the events that led to Graham being sent to speak to Calum and Neil.
2. Why is Graham so displeased about being sent to speak to the brothers?
3. Why does Graham lose patience with Neil?
4. What are Neil’s objections to helping Roderick get down from the tree?
5. What is the difference between Neil and Graham’s attitudes towards Lady Runcie-Campbell?
6. How does Graham try to convince Neil to come with him?
7. How does Duror react to the news of their refusal to help?
8. What signs are there that he is going to confront them violently?
9. How does Lady Runcie-Campbell react to their refusal?
10. How does she react when she hears that Duror has gone after them?
11. What does this tell us about her assessment of his mental state?
12. What explains her frantic journey through the forest apart from concern for her son?
13. Why does she fail to feel anger towards the cone-gatherers?
14. Why is she most concerned about Roderick when she hears the gunshot and assumes Duror has harmed the cone-gatherers?
15. Explain as far as possible why Lady Runcie-Campbell feels a mixture of pity, hope and joy when she sees Calum’s dead body.

**Language Analysis**

1. Analyse in detail the language of this quotation and explain what it helps us to understand at the end of the novel: *“She wept pity, and purified hope, and joy, welled up in her heart.”* (page 118)
2. Analyse what impression we are given of Callum in the end and how this fits in to the theme good versus evil: “*He hung therefore in twisted fashion, and kept swinging. His arms were loose and dangled in macabre gestures of supplication. Though he smiled, he was dead. From his bag dropped a cone, and then another.”*
3. *“Duror, with his face shattered and bloody, lay dead.” By commenting on language, show how does Duror’s demise relate to the themes of the text.*

**Themes**

Considering the novel as a whole, create mind-maps/posters or timelines, tracking the development of the following themes. You should include explanations of character, setting, key incident and quotations.

* Good versus evil
* Nature
* Class
* Religion
* War

**Characterisation** – complete the rows below. For each character select one or two key quotations that you feel captures the essence of them.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Quote (s)** | **Symbolises/ links to theme** | **Personality** | **Start to end change** |
| **Duror** |  |  |  |  |
| **Callum** |  |  |  |  |
| **Neil** |  |  |  |  |
| **Lady Rucnie Campbell** |  |  |  |  |
| **Roderick** |  |  |  |  |



**Important Quotations**

**This is not an exhaustive list of the key quotations from the novel. These are but a few that may help to exemplify the development of plot, setting, characterisation and theme.**

**Duror**

* “ in an icy sweat of hatred, with his gun aimed all the time at the feebleminded hunchback” pg. 9
* “Since childhood Duror had been repelled by anything living that had an imperfection or deformity or lack” pg.10/11
* “It astonished Duror that she, so genuinely good, should be helping him in his evil plan.” pg.49
* “He was like a tree, still showing green leaves; but underground death was creeping along the roots.” pg.59
* “with one hand cut its throat savagely with the other. Blood spouted.” pg.70
* “he felt in a mood for murder, rape, or suicide” pg.104
* “Duror with the naked doll in his fist and the obscene accusations so lusciously on his lips.” p179
* “Duror, with his face shattered and bloody, lay dead” pg.181

**Callum**

* “he was as indigenous as squirrel or bird”
* “This was the terrifying mystery, why creatures he loved should kill one another”.
* “with consummate confidence and grace began the descent through the inner night of the great tree...on the ground...hurrying to keep close behind, often stumbled.”
* “Calum, demoralised as always by hatred, had cowered against the hut, hiding his face.”
* “Calum no longer was one of the beaters; he too was a dear hunted by remorseless men. Moaning and gasping, he fled after them, with no hope of saving them from slaughter.”
* “Calum flung himself upon the deer, clasped it round the neck, and tried to comfort it”.
* “His arms were loose and dangled in macabre gestures of supplication. Though he smiled, he was dead.”

**Neil**

* “We’re human beings just like them. We need space to live and breathe in.”
* “To look after his brother, he had never got married, though once he had come very near it: that memory often revived to turn his heart melancholy.”
* “The constant sight of the mansion house chimneys, reminding him of their hut, which to him remained a symbol of humiliation.”
* “The trees are more precious than we are”
* “Haven’t we got the right to keep ourselves alive? Is the Lady like the rain, and the thunder and lightning that we should be forced to flee from her as well?”
* “With moans and yelps of lamentation like an animal his brother was struggling along that branch to try and reach him.”

**Lady Runcie Campbell**

* “Lady Runcie-Campbell had given permission as a patriotic duty.' Pg.8
* “Her voice was still harsh. ‘Are we being unfair to this poor wretch?' she asked. 'After all, he is deformed, and a simpleton.' pg.50
* “Lady Runcie Campbell felt annoyed: the situation was so grotesque that anything, even decent pity or pardonable amazement, would add to the sordidness” pg.72
* 'What is the meaning of this?' Though astonishment, and perhaps dampness, made her voice hoarse, it nevertheless was far more appalling to the two men than any thunder” pg.129
* “She couldn't pray, but she could weep; and as she wept pity, and purified hope, and joy, welled up in her heart.” pg.181

**Roderick**

* “Why don’t we offer them a lift, Mother?’ asked Roderick, in the quiet voice she had come to regard as ominous. ‘We’ve got plenty of room.”
* “We didn’t treat them fairly.”
* “Human beings are more important than dogs.”
* “Duror was a barrier he could not pass.”
* “Roderick knew that the struggle between good and evil never rested: in the world, and in every human being, it went on. The war was an enormous example. Good did not always win.”
* “I think he was meaning to collect the cones, like those men from Ardmore.”

**Chapter One Textual Analysis**

Carefully read the extract and then attempt the questions below. Remember to pay close attention the marks awarded and the line references.

***Extract: “Hidden among the spruces at the edge of the ride, near enough to catch the smell of larch off the cones… which the arrival of these cone-gatherers seemed at last about to let loose.”***

**1.** By referring closely to the language in lines 1 – 41, *“Hidden among the spruces at the edge of the ride, near enough to catch the smell of larch off the cones… to pollute every tree in the wood except the silver firs near the big house”,* explain what is revealed about:

**i)** Duror’s state of mind **2**

**ii)** Duror’s changing attitude about the forest  **2**

**2.** By referring closely to the language in lines 42 - 54*,”Duror was alone in his obsession… reproved them instantly and sharply,”* identify how Jenkins reveals how other characters’ view the brothers. **2**

**3.** Identify and analyse Jenkins’ use of language in the closing paragraph (lines 55 – 63), *“Since childhood Duror had been repelled… which the arrival of these cone-gatherers seemed at last about to let loose.”* Explain how it conveys Duror’s worsening attitude towards deformity. **4**

**4.** Discuss how Jenkins develops the troubled character of Duror, by referring to this extract and elsewhere in the novel.  **10**



**Past Paper Textual Analysis Ten Mark Questions**

**2018**

**Chapter Five:** “In the tree her was Callum’s happiness… ‘The trees are more precious than we are,’ he added bitterly.”

By referring to this extract and to elsewhere in the novel, discuss how Jenkins explores themes of power. **10**

**2017**

**Storm extract:** “In the tip of the tall larch they were in a good position to watch the approach of the storm…“Maybe I did.”

By referring to this extract and to elsewhere in the novel, discuss how Jenkins uses symbolism to develop the central concerns of the text. **10**

**2016**

**Roderick walks to CG’s hut: “**By the time the hut came in sight he was exhausted, in body and spirit; sweat of exertion and of fear drenched him…Then in the cypress the gun cracked, and the two men lay dead on the grass.”

With reference to this extract, and to elsewhere in the novel, discuss how the writer develops the theme of conflict between good and evil. **10**

**2015**

**Extract from chapter 4. Duror talks with LRC: “**Lady Runcie-Campbell was in the office at the front of the house writing letters…She’s been cut off so much longer.”

In the novel, Duror is presented not just as an evil character, but one who might be worthy of some sympathy. With reference to this extract and elsewhere in the novel, explain how both aspects of Duror’s character are portrayed. **10**

**Specimen Paper**

**Extract with Mr Tulloch and CG discussing beach hut:** “When he caught sight of Neil ahead of him, he halted and watched from behind a slender spruce long ago wind-blown, with its roots in the air…I’m seeing her this afternoon, and I’m going to tell her I’m taking you back to Ardmore.”

Neil’s words “Why is it…that the innocent have always to be sacrificed?” clarify one of the central concerns of the text. With reference to such features as setting, characterisation and narrative in this extract and elsewhere in the novel, discuss how Jenkins develops our understanding of this central concern. **10**