

An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry

MA Full Thesis

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Due Date: May 2019



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Acknowledgements

Firstly, I want to give thanks to Allah (swt) for carrying me during this arduous journey.

To my incredible supervisor, Dr Courtney Davids, I owe so much to you. Thanks for believing in this research project and for your incredible patience with my drafts. Your guidance and motivational WhatsApp messages kept me going during dark times.

Thank you to the English educators and management at the two high schools for kindly allowing me to interview their matriculants. This thesis rests on these learners' responses and I want to thank them for being so open and honest by allowing me into their subjective worlds.

To my friend Zaid Railoun, I appreciate how you selflessly took the time to proofread whilst offering words of reassurance and support.

To my siblings: my twin sister Natalie, and brothers Alex, Tommy and Ethan. You have always been my inspiration and thank you for setting the bar so high. I also want to thank my grandparents- Fuad Laubscher and the late Koelsom Laubscher, Alex and Olive Lawrence.

The unconditional encouragement from my phenomenal stepfather (Peter Petersen) and stepmother (Rosline Lawrence) was valued.

To my Dad, Alex Lawrence- a writer and activist. You are my gentle giant, hero and inspiration. Thank you for everything that you have done for me.

I am most grateful to my husband, Mogammad Shaafi. Your unconditional support and actions spoke volumes whether it was jumping in the car to buy late night cappuccinos and energy drinks to fuel me, or sitting by my side in deep silent endorsement as I worked through the night on my laptop. Your presence was all that mattered to me.

Dedication

To my Mother and best friend, Vera Petersen. This thesis would literally have not been possible without your persistent encouragement and belief in me, even when I struggled to believe in myself. Thank you for instilling within me, an admiration and yearning for literature, knowledge and education. Most of all, thank you for holding my hand throughout this journey and for always teaching me to chase my dreams even if they are bigger than the sun.

This degree is dedicated to you.



Abstract

The thesis offers insight into English literature studies as taught at high school level to Grade 12 learners, employing Louise Rosenblatt's reader response theory to explore and understand their encounter and engagement with prescribed poetry by enquiring as to whether social conditions in their lives allow an identification with these poems. The thesis argues for the validity and implementation of reader response theory in the South African curriculum because when learners engage with their memories, experiences and opinions; identification with the poem is possible. If learners identify with the poems that are being taught, there may be a sense of harmony as they realise that their problems or experiences are not in isolation. The sample population comprises of learners attending two high schools located in Mitchells Plain, Cape Town: a community that presents a myriad of societal challenges. Proper ethical considerations were followed in order to gain access to the research sites and anonymity was promised to all research participants. The research entails the usage of open-ended questionnaires to elicit data which has been processed qualitatively by means of content analysis whereby various central social environment themes were identified. A background of Mitchells Plain's social ills is provided in order to understand the challenges facing the research participants. The thesis offers an extensive discussion on the history and current state of education in South Africa, as well as a delineation of the study of the discipline of poetry by highlighting its proposed benefits from humanities and scientific perspectives. Additionally, the thesis provides a background on different reader response theories and published reader response studies with a focus on the social environment of the individual for further elucidation of the theoretical framework. Results of the study reveal that the selected poems by William Blake, W.H. Auden, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Chinua Achebe yield fascinating responses as most research participants can socially identify with the contextual themes and characters. The thesis sheds light on a few shortcomings or limitations which may have impacted the data collection process and provides recommendations on how to improve any future related studies and possibilities of best teaching practice of English literature in South African high schools.

Keywords

Reader Response Theory

Social Identification

Poetry

Department of Basic Education

Grade 12

Mitchells Plain

William Blake- "The Garden of Love"

W.H. Auden- "Funeral Blues"

Gerard Manley Hopkins- "Felix Randal"

Chinua Achebe- "Vultures"

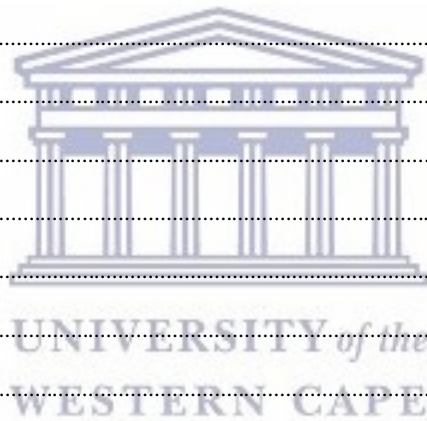


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Introduction

The thesis engages with reader response theory to explore how social factors within Grade 12 learners' lived experiences may influence whether and why they socially identify with the poetry prescribed by the Department of Basic Education. This study is significant as the Department of Basic Education redrafted the literature portion of the Grade 12 English Home Language curriculum, which led to an inclusion of new poems, novels and plays in 2017. To date there has been a dearth in proffered research concerning whether the new selection of poems are relatable to current matriculants, therefore making this study the first of its kind. Due to the thesis focus on the concept of identification, it is necessary to expand on my reasons for researching social identification. In her award-winning influential work, *Literature as Exploration* (1968), Louise Rosenblatt explores the relationship between the reader and literary text, positing that when the reader encounters a literary text that mirrors their own lives, it has a profound effect on them as they are aware that their personal problems and conflicts are not in isolation (200). Moreover, when a reader connects with a character and attempts to understand their conflict and emotional state, they feel a sense of release of their own deep-seated fears and concerns (Rosenblatt 200-201). To elucidate, an adolescent who is undergoing the tough life challenges of their psychological stage may want to pursue a certain path or adopt a worldview which is shunned by their family circle, will possibly find comfort in a character or ideal present in a literary text. This connection with the literary text would be where they receive much-needed delineation and affirmation of identity (Rosenblatt 202). It is vital to explore whether current matriculants can relate to the new set of poems through means of identification. The focus groups of Grade 12 learners to be studied for this thesis are drawn from Mitchells Plain, as opposed to the greater Cape Flats area, as Mitchells Plain has been a nucleus of various social ills, most notably crime, poverty, substance abuse and gangsterism which will be expanded upon later in the thesis. It should be noted that the thesis does not assume that these social ills do not occur in varying degrees in more affluent neighbourhoods and schools. Mitchells Plain's unique social context is particularly challenging and I am eager to understand if these problems influence how their high school learners react to, and interpret the prescribed poetry.

In 2016, I taught English Home Language at a Mitchells Plain high school which will remain anonymous. I witnessed social and psychological problems present in the learners'

lives which they had become accustomed to as merely the 'norm'. A context of such social, psychological and developmental instability is one which ought to be studied owing to its interesting relation to adolescents' identification with literature. In an opinion piece to mark 2015's National Book Week which occurs in September annually, Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga displayed her fervent support for the development of a reading culture amongst South African children and youth as she says, "Putting books in children's hands is to help them to realize that reading can be enjoyable and something they will want to do on their own. We need to not only teach children to read but to be avid and lifelong readers" (n. pag). Furthermore, she argues,

Books can be the best of gifts – and yet often parents choose games or gadgets over books for their children. To own a book is to own a lifelong treasure, a source of knowledge and wisdom, something that can take us away from the cares of the world for a while at least, a source of inspiration or encouragement (n. pag).

The statement is included here for the purpose of highlighting the importance of a reading culture amongst South Africans and this needs to be instilled during the foundational years. The thesis turns on an analysis derived from data collected which is based on the students' reader response engagement to the prescribed poems taught at two Mitchells Plain high schools. Chapter 1 of the thesis will provide an expansive literature review. The subsequent chapters will offer a close analysis of findings arising from the data collection, including a chapter which will discuss possible shortcomings to the research project and recommendations for future studies and the general enhancement of English literature education in South Africa. Before the thesis shifts to chapter 1, it is essential to have a full grasp of the current English literature teaching practices around the world and locally, in order to understand the processes and interactions occurring on the ground level most notably because international and local classrooms are becoming increasingly similar. For example, most classroom populations are of a multicultural nature which means that the educator must therefore navigate a variety of cultural traditions, worldviews and customs (Alsubaie 86). This vibrant context directly influences teaching practice and approaches. Firstly, to illustrate this point of the multicultural classroom, Kenan Metzger, Andrea Box and James Blasingame's study, "Embracing Intercultural Diversification: Teaching Young Adult Literature with Native American Themes" (2013) asserts the notion that there are five million Native Americans in the United States of America, yet they are underrepresented in the school curriculum (57). In addition, a strong method of

implementing culture in the school curriculum is through the teaching of literature, but care should be taken to consult necessary authorities on how to fully represent the correct cultural practices and traditions (57). They also allude to a study conducted whereby Native American literature was taught in a high school classroom to Native American students and non-Native American students. There was a definite shift in the learners' attitudes towards the idea that the exercise enabled them to be more aware of their own culture, as well as other cultures even outside of the school context (57).

A similar article was published regarding understanding diverse cultures and opinions in the classroom. In "Towards an Ethical Approach to Perspective-taking and the Teaching of Multicultural Texts: Getting beyond Persuasion, Politeness and Political Correctness" (2012), Amanda Haertling Thein and DeAnn Long Sloan explore the issues of perspective-taking which is a widely-used technique in the international English literature curriculum. Perspective-taking involves students engaging in activities whereby they adopt different perspectives in order to fully understand varied opinions and worldviews (Haertling Thein and Long Sloan 314). For example, the learner may adopt the perspective of the antagonist in a novel to understand the character's motivations and desires. This approach, they contend, is especially important when studying multicultural literature because readers are encouraged to view things from a standpoint where they may not have done so before (Haertling Thein and Long Sloan 318). Further on the point of perspective-taking research, Tracey S. Hodges and others attempt to determine whether a confluence of reader response theory, dual coding theory and perspective-taking have a direct positive contributory influence on the improvement of reading comprehension. The researchers put forward the notion that learners engage with literary texts in a transactional manner as they contemplate their own daily experiences as well as that of the characters (Hodges et al. 346). Through this engagement, the reader accesses the deeper mental conditions and states of the aforementioned characters (Hodges et al. 346). The data was collected by means of inferential questions monitoring the learners' understanding of the storyline as well as their viewpoints of characters' actions (Hodges et al. 350). The key goal was to evaluate whether the learners' perspectives transitioned and how this influenced their understanding of the literary text (Hodges et al. 350). Finally, the observed results illustrate a marked increase in learners' self-esteem, reading comprehension and vocabulary content (Hodges et al. 356).

Most international studies existing in the realm of English literature tend to focus on English Second Language (ESL) learners' knowledge acquisition and various teaching

strategies. An interesting study provides insight to the various techniques employed in classrooms which is based on a conception of literature teaching approaches as proposed by Carter and Long (cited in Sii and Chen 2). Their three affirmed main models of teaching methodologies are the Cultural Model, the Language Model and the Personal Growth Model. Each category consists of a few teaching approaches but most notably, the Cultural Model comprises of the Information-based Approach (Sii and Chen 2). This popular literature teaching strategy emphasises that literature is a vehicle through which cultural values, ideals and philosophies are transmitted (Sii and Chen 2). It is the duty of engaging learners to place the encountered literary text in the specific social or historical framework from which it derives (Sii and Chen 2) The Language Model Approach views literature as a mechanism to also improve language skills as learners typically notice vocabulary and sentence structure when they read (Sii and Chen 2). The learners adopt a more philosophical stance with the Personal Growth Model of teaching as they analyse literary texts thematically and link them to bigger questions and conflicts within their own lives (Sii and Chen 4). The findings support other researchers' arguments that the Cultural Model's Information-based Approach is most effective and worthwhile for teaching literature to English Second Language learners (Sii and Chen 13).

The aforementioned trends are not fully representative of all English literature techniques utilised worldwide but do offer an insight into the most common techniques utilised by English teachers. The discussion now turns locally, as the poems in the research question form part of Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) - the national curriculum which is diligently followed by all South African state schools. In some cases, privately-funded independent schools have also adopted the curriculum. The CAPS policy document which outlines guidelines for implementing the curriculum is considered the essential policy document in public school teaching, and educators' adherence to its content and teaching plans is unconditionally expected. A closer inspection of the CAPS policy document for "Grades 10-12 English Home Language" is necessary because it contains the Grade 12 teaching plan (Department of Basic Education 12). According to the Department of Basic Education, the primary aim of teaching literature is to cultivate a sense of literary appreciation among learners as they are exposed to figurative, symbolic ideas and beliefs (Department of Basic Education 12). The most striking part of the entire policy document is the Department of Basic Education's stance that the educator should take a step back in the classroom when teaching literature and refrain from imposing their own interpretations

on learners as they (learners) should be encouraged to engage and draw conclusions on their own due to the standpoint that there is no actual right or wrong answer (Department of Basic Education 12). This stance, which resembles the principles of reader response theory, is not actually implemented in schools. In my experience as a student teacher and as a teacher, in relation to our engagement with literature in the classroom, we as educators are shaped by the preconceived perception that there is a “correct” answer and learners are discouraged from veering off the path of this standard correct answer. A further troubling notion is the Department of Basic Education’s contradictory claim that literary interpretation is entirely a University skill and of no concern to the high school learner (Department of Basic Education 12). To summarise, the Department of Basic Education’s viewpoint of literature teaching is to allow learners to create their own meaning, yet this idea is questionable as it is not implemented in virtually all South African state schools.

Building on the idea of a multicultural learner population as illustrated in international English classroom studies, local researcher Ansurie Pillay’s “How Teachers of English in South African Schools Recognise their Change Agency” (2017) considers values and methods employed by English teachers and how they impact their learners’ lives. Time will be spent on discussing the data yielded which has shed light on interesting English teaching approaches occurring in some local classrooms. A large amount of research participants were definite change agents in the classroom as they practised democratic principles (Pillay 6). One teacher stated that her aim is to prepare learners to engage with different cultural and social communities which is why she uses literary texts to educate about the worlds existing outside their classroom (Pillay 6). By engaging with characters and places different to their own, she teaches her learners about social norms, cultural features and traditions which enable them to attempt to understand and respect the subjective world of people outside their specific community (Pillay 7).

Another English teacher uses the contact time with learners to cultivate English-based discussions about race, love, family members, empathy, human rights and responsibility (Pillay 5). Her particular approach is considered a form of therapy as most of the learners in her class experience domestic and personal problems (Pillay 5). Whilst reading novels and short stories, she highlights these topical sensitive issues such as parental abandonment and helplessness (Pillay 5). She further assists her learners in coming to terms with these issues which, in turn, engendered an increase in their self-esteem and enthusiasm for English (Pillay 5). Pillay further underscores that the creation of a non-threatening, calm and friendly teaching-learning environment is important to one of the English teachers. This educator

routinely asks learners about their personal lives and interests and in this way, they value the study of literary texts as they believe their opinion matters (Pillay 6).

A prominent factor which considerably affects the teaching of languages and other subjects in South Africa, is the notion that the world is embracing technology and classrooms should reflect this movement. According to the Western Cape Government (hereon referred to as WCG) report, a constant challenge in many schools is that teachers are struggling to cope and deliver the content of the curriculum and provide the necessary skills because they rely on traditional teaching methods (WCG n. pag). For elucidation, traditional teaching methods refer to the usage of a blackboard/whiteboard and chalk or whiteboard marker, as well as the employment of textbooks and writing books.

WCG's intervention is formally known as the "eLearning Game Changer" (WCG n. pag). As the name suggests, the intention is to pioneer a novel method of teaching and learning in Western Cape schools (WCG n. pag). There is a specific focus on implementing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in schools through the necessary physical infrastructure and administration maintenance systems (WCG n. pag). This is accompanied by intense and ongoing training of educators who eventually become competent and comfortable with utilising ICT in their lessons (WCG n. pag). A visionary goal of the WCG's initiative is to level the playing field of advantaged and disadvantaged schools as all learners will be able to upskill themselves with ICT skills and also engage with appropriate, quality learning materials online (WCG n. pag). One of the methods of implementation is the provision of Wide Area Network (WAN) to schools and the latest figures show that the WCG successfully installed WAN in 1245 schools in 2018 (WCG n. pag). Another considerable success is the fact that they also make Local Area Network (LAN) available to schools and they envisage reaching 412 schools by the end of 2019 (WCG n. pag). Additional figures indicate that since the eLearning Game Changer implementation, 33600 tablets were made available to learners and 6500 smartboards have been installed in schools across the province (WCG n. pag).

Former Provincial Minister of Basic Education, Donald Grant, notes in a 2012 media release entitled "The Western Cape Government's Vision for ICT in Education", that the vision of the government in terms of the integration of ICT in schools

involves a shift from traditional methods of teaching and learning in conventional education environments where appropriate to e-Teaching, e-Learning and virtual learning environments where digital resources and systems are more readily available to schools and the engagement between educators and learners is more enhanced than before (n. pag).

A typical English lesson involving the implementation of this kind of technology would concern the educator accessing a laptop and data projector and then showing a relevant PowerPoint presentation or YouTube video to the class. The learners may even use applications on their phones to answer a quiz based on the novel being studied. The relevance to the present study is that English educator may present a reader response lesson with the aid of a tablet or YouTube, for example. The possibilities are boundless; however, a considerable number of factors need to be taken into account when introducing ICT in curriculum delivery at schools. Firstly, if educators are not properly assisted when technical issues arise, this would create problems in their lessons as well as with their feelings of motivation for engaging with technology in the classroom (Chigona, Chigona and Davids 4). Also, it is essential for schools to have a technical expert who is available for these technical queries and problems which may arise (Chigona, Chigona and Davids 4). Of course it is important for teachers to be able to confidently work independently on computers or smartboards and this can only be achieved through proper training by means of in-service training and workshops (Skues and Cunningham 180). Schools also need to ensure that IT laboratories have a sufficient amount of computers for learners (Chigona, Chigona and Davids 5). This point is crucial because when students share a computer with a classmate or simply do not have one at all, it may impact greatly on their ability to concentrate and synthesise the information of the lesson. Unfortunately, many learners from disadvantaged communities do not possess competent IT skills and this is a reality which needs to be considered and addressed when implementing ICT in the classroom (Chigona, Chigona and Davids 5). Educators who exert themselves and spend more time helping learners log on or navigate websites, lose important teaching time which acts as a great hindrance in the teaching and learning process (Chigona, Chigona and Davids 5).

A recent South African study by Keshnee Padayachee examines these obstacles as presented in local classrooms and her data reveals that common problems are lack of internet access, data projectors and electricity blackouts (51-52). In the average classroom, learners tend to become ill-disciplined by displaying unfavourable, noisy behaviour and may even play computer games while the teacher and other learners are engaged in the lesson (Padayachee 52). I have witnessed all of these factors when attempting to conduct technologically-driven lessons in my career. An often-overlooked issue relevant to ICT in teaching is that some educators resort to utilising their own funds to aid their lessons. For example, they might purchase their own laptops and mobile data without any assistance from schools (Padayachee 52). It is important to note despite these challenges, the Western Cape

Education Department's eLearning Game Changer initiative has been considerably successful. Additionally, the aim of their eLearning initiative has a specific emphasis on Mathematics and Language education. Their designated website to achieve their goal is the "ePortal" which offers technological educational material to several audiences such as the learner, the educator, parents and school managers (Western Cape Education Department n. pag). There is provision for many subjects and the English Home Language section is a treasure trove of mobile application downloads, eBooks, audio clips, videos and past examination papers and memoranda. The Western Cape Education Department also invites all qualified educators to contribute and upload additional interesting educational materials (Western Cape Education Department n. pag).

An admirable fact is that in 2016, at the Department of Basic Education's annual National Teaching Awards ceremony, a Mitchells Plain high school English teacher and ICT coordinator was named the best eLearning educator in the country (Agherdien n. pag). This bears testimony to the fact that English classrooms are embracing the advancement and arrival of a more modern, technological society which enhances the teaching of subjects and these changes can only champion the cause of reader response theory in the curriculum. An overview of teaching approaches in local classrooms must include an overview of Inclusive Education which is the teaching of learners who are differently-abled or have impairments. The thesis touches on Inclusive Education as it may act as a beneficial tool for learners in Mitchells Plain as the suburb is home to a few LSEN (Learners with Special Education Needs) schools which demonstrates the need for awareness. Reading response engagements in the classroom can also be adapted through the lens of Inclusive Education, which will be elucidated later. The most significant policy document for Inclusive Education in South Africa is "Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System" (Dalton, Mckenzie and Kahonde 2).

The foundation of this document examines practical and theoretical strategies for addressing the educational needs of learners who encounter barriers to learning (Dalton et al. 2). There are two key components of the document : "The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support" (SIAS) which offers clarity on identifying and assessing learners with special needs (Dalton et al. 2) and "The Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement" which is a problem-solving document for school management on how to administer and approach Inclusive Education in their schools (Dalton et al. 2). In addition, the White Paper also provides directives such as not referring to these learners as disabled and offering maximised support (Department of Basic Education 10). Inclusive Education is

a concern which calls for adaptable teaching approaches or rather, differentiated instruction. The full range of adaptations is far too lengthy to elucidate in this thesis but my point is that more South African schools need to cater for learners with physical, visual or learning impairments either in full scale special schools or in mainstream schools. The teaching of English can therefore be modified to suit the context. For example, teachers may act as examination scribes for learners who are unable to write effectively due to conditions such as cerebral palsy or generalised anxiety disorder. It is important for schools to have wheelchair ramps and visually impaired learners may benefit from specialised examination question papers with enlarged font. It is important to note that some of these modifications have been implemented in schools but there is potential for improvement.

I now turn to the curriculum and focus of the study. There are twelve prescribed poems for the National Senior Certificate English Home Language syllabus. These poems are: "First Day After the War" by Mazisi Kunene, "Motho Ke Motho Ka Batho Babang" by Jeremy Cronin, "somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond" by E.E Cummings, "The Zulu Girl" by Roy Campbell, "An African Thunderstorm" by David Rubadiri, "The Garden of Love" by William Blake, "Funeral Blues" by W.H. Auden, "Remember" by Christina Rossetti, "A Hard Frost" by Cecil Day-Lewis, "Felix Randal" by Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Vultures" by Chinua Achebe and "An African Elegy" by Ben Okri. For the purpose of this study, I have decided to select the last 7 poems, as I believe they fit the essentials of the research question. These poems tap into the social aspects of learners' lives, and this is the phenomenon I wish to investigate. They concern ideas such as hardships, racism, sexuality, relationships, culture, religion, understanding of the greater scheme of things, and existentialism. Across cultures and racial lines, these issues affecting the human condition are relevant to all of us. I therefore contend that it will be quite interesting to use these poems as a foundation for a reader response engagement. This selection of poems left me intrigued as to whether research participants will read "The Garden of Love" and perhaps agree with the strong sentiment against the Church. On the other hand, maybe some learners might voice how their own sexuality is being repressed by their parents, or society. This may lead to a learner conjuring up past negative experiences concerning sexuality, like sexual abuse, for example. A learner may also consider the idea of control in other facets of their life, whether it is at home or in school. They might look at social factors such as the family unit or their own religious church or grouping. Learners in particularly gang-ridden areas might also look at their own social circumstances, and relate to this idea of repression and control, as they are unable to fully actualise themselves in their environment since they are

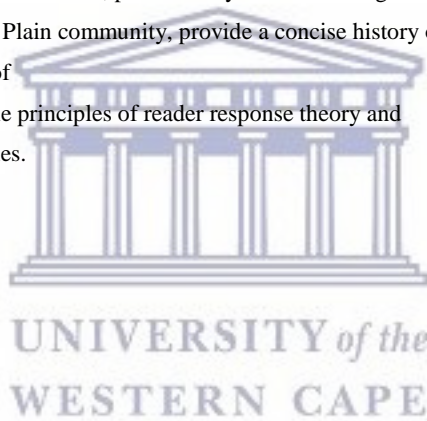
limited in what they do at home, where they go, and who they associate with. I therefore selected these poems because of a keenness to hear how the learners' readings and interpretations of their poems are affected by the various social factors.

The thesis proceeds to examine the 2017 National Senior Certificate results because it is important to understand the current state of Grade 12 English Home Language teaching and learning in relation to the recommendation aims of the thesis. The Department of Basic Education annually releases the National Senior Certificate Diagnostic Report after every series of National Senior Certificate examinations. The document analyses learners' examination answers in terms of strengths and gaps in knowledge. Addressing the identified challenges and actively working through them is an aim of the report (Department of Basic Education 1). More importantly, the report's analysis on the poetry section in the English Home Language Paper 2 examination indicates various shortcomings. Uppermost is the conclusion that many learners lacked basic poetry analytical techniques and paraphrased the poems in their answers (Department of Basic Education 34). Also, there was a general sense that learners could not think figuratively but only interpreted the poems on a literal level (Department of Basic Education 34). The report notes with frustration that learners failed to grasp foundational literary terms such as diction, imagery, mood and tone (Department of Basic Education 34). The most concerning finding for the Department of Basic Education is the fact that many learners seemed to have been taught the poems incorrectly by their educators (Department of Basic Education 34). For example, in Roy Campbell's "The Zulu Girl", some learners referenced the female character as a prostitute instead of a hardworking mother (Department of Basic Education 34). This particular finding is of interest to this study because it once again highlights the fact that the Department of Basic Education adopts a 'tunnel vision' approach where a standard marking memorandum is handed to teachers and there is little or no space for personal learner involvement or interpretation. The 2018 National Senior Certificate Diagnostic Report's findings are markedly similar to the previous year's report. Many learners could not access the poems figuratively and utilised the technique of paraphrasing the poems instead of properly analysing them (Department of Basic Education 29). In addition to this, learners generally struggled with poetic terminology such as mood and diction (Department of Basic Education 29). There was a trend to also ignore the lines indication in poetry questions resulting in vague answers and many learners merely copied and pasted memoranda they had studied beforehand directly into their answers which proved problematic (Department of Basic Education 29).

The data was collected from two high schools located in Mitchells Plain, Cape Town. I visited High School A on two separate occasions (15 February and 26 June 2018). It is

situated in Rocklands, which is considered to be one of the most crime-ridden areas in Mitchells Plain. I engaged with a Grade 12 English Home Language class of 45 learners in the first session. The second session consisted of a smaller group of 10 learners which occurred during the June school holiday. In terms of the National Senior Certificate results; in 2017, 150 candidates wrote the National Senior Certificate examinations at the school which resulted in above-average pass rate. Their academic standing improved in 2018, as the Matric pass rate increased.

The second school featured in the exploration of reader response theory study is High School B. This Eastridge high school adheres to the CAPS curriculum as well as offering additional subjects. At this school, I interviewed one Grade 12 class, on 5 July 2018, which consisted of 21 learners. In 2017, their Matric pass rate stood at an exemplary figure. The last National Senior Certificate examinations witnessed a slight decline. As I am interested in exploring how learners socially identify with the poems, it is vital to understand that the communities in which they thrive, and where their schools are located, present a myriad of challenges. Chapter 1 will offer insight into the Mitchells Plain community, provide a concise history of education in South Africa, explore the value of poetry and shall comprehensively delineate the principles of reader response theory and results of peer-reviewed reader response studies.



Chapter 1

Historical background of Mitchells Plain

In consideration of the notions which affect English teaching in the South African context, it is imperative that one understands the historical and social context of Mitchells Plain as the gathered data is affected by these factors. The Apartheid era in South Africa was marked by racially-oppressive laws which upheld the socio-economic rights and privileges of the White minority. For clarification, all references to racial classifications in this thesis are in accordance with customary racial classifications predominant in South Africa currently. One of the major Apartheid laws was a series of three Acts known as the Group Areas Act. They were formulated and implemented over several years and the aim was to target issues such as the development of separate townships for different races as well as the control of property

and occupation of land (Kloppers and Pienaar 685). The Group Areas Act was eventually utilised to support the Apartheid policy of separate development and as a result, between 1960 and 1983, approximately 3.5 million non-White South Africans who were living in newly-classified 'White areas' were forcibly removed (Kloppers and Pienaar 686). The injustice and inferiority experienced by non-Whites was quickly channelled into the way the government allocated land and housing (Wood Mah and River 292). According to the hierarchical allocation system, Whites were on the receiving end of urban prime land of good quality and possibilities (Wood Mah and River 292). However, non-Whites were relegated to mainly rural land which had significantly limited fertilisation and economic potential (Wood Mah and River 292). In the 1970s, many Coloureds were relocated to the Cape Flats which was a designated series of Coloured townships (Ehrlich, Du Toit, Jordaan, Volmink, Weinberg and Zwarenstein 1139). One of the Cape Flats suburbs is Mitchells Plain which is situated some distance outside the centre of Cape Town. The general perception is that the Cape Flats is riddled with social ills such as poverty and crime.

Present social context facing Mitchells Plain residents

According to the most recent 2011 Cape Town Census conducted by the City of Cape Town and released by Statistics South Africa, Mitchells Plain is home to approximately 310 485 residents (Statistics South Africa n. pag). In terms of demographic makeup, 91 percent of the residents are Coloured, with Black Africans comprising of the majority of the rest of the population (Statistics South Africa n. pag). English and Afrikaans are the main languages used in the households; with 47 percent of respondents adhering to English, and 46 percent are Afrikaans-speaking (Statistics South Africa n. pag).

One of the main current challenges in Mitchells Plain is violence, which can be seen in forms such as school-based violence and domestic violence. This former type of violence is especially detrimental to the adolescent due to the possible long-term effects such as depression and the development of anti-social behaviour later in life (Burton and Leoschut 4). Truancy is another issue which is common as the victimised learners skip school out of fear of encountering their bullies (Burton and Leoschut 4). Also, regular relationships with friends and adults will likely suffer due to a lack of trust (Burton and Leoschut 4).

According to the South African Council of Educators (SACE) in 2015, South Africa had the most incidents of violence at schools worldwide, coming only second after Jamaica (Ntuli n. pag). The issue of violence in specifically Western Cape schools was addressed by

the country's largest educator trade union, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), in various reports throughout 2017. Their statistics indicate that in January to March 2017, there had been a total of 52 attacks on teachers; comprising of 9 attacks by community members, 39 attacks by learners and 4 attacks made by parents (SADTU n. pag). The situation became bleaker in the fourth term of 2017 (October-December) as there were 134 reported incidents of teacher abuse and 14 reported incidents of teacher trauma (SADTU n. pag). The trade union continued the same argument in 2018 when they released a media statement in which they expressed their deep concerns regarding the ongoing violence against teachers and learners on school premises and they stated that they will continue to condemn the cruel incidents "lest they become a norm." (SADTU n. pag). SADTU also acknowledged that many of these unacceptable acts of school-based violence remain unreported to authorities and the media (SADTU n. pag).

There have been few studies regarding school-based violence in Mitchells Plain. However, Nancy Shields, Kathy Nadasen and Christine Hanneke (2014) explore Cape Town educators' psychological responses to school-based violence. The data collection tools are focus groups and questionnaires. One of the four focus groups involved a cohort of teachers practising in Mitchells Plain. The researchers in the study ascertain that Mitchells Plain had the highest number of crimes of any South African precinct in 2012 (Shields, Nadasen & Hanneke 3). The results of the study indicate that educators generally experience an overwhelming sense of helplessness and that violence interferes with the teaching and learning process for educators and learners alike (Shields, Nadasen & Hanneke 4). Most of the teachers interviewed reported that external factors exacerbated school-based violence such as the shortage of learning materials, learner family issues and learner illicit substance use (Shields, Nadasen & Hanneke 8). These conclusions are useful in understanding the context of the daily school life of the learners in the present research project as Mitchells Plain has had its fair share of school-based violence. The Progressive Principals Association (PPA), which was established in 2011, is a body of approximately 150 school principals, mostly from Mitchells Plain, who aim to enlighten the public about social ills affecting schools. In March 2018, the organisational body raised their discontent with the alarming acts of school-based violence occurring in Mitchells Plain (Palm n. pag). At the time, a learner was stabbed at a school gate by a group of learners with a scissors and screwdriver (Palm n. pag). Additional recent incidents include three Mitchells Plain learners being stabbed by a fellow learner after a gang-related argument in February 2017 (Botha n. pag), a man was shot dead in front of approximately a hundred learners at a Mitchells Plain primary school in the same month (Persens n. pag) and of equal concern is that this is a repeat of an incident of a few years ago when an alleged gangster was killed outside a Mitchells Plain

primary school on a weekday morning while learners were being dropped off by parents (Isaacs n. pag).

One of the considered social factors for the research project is the family environment and studies indicate that in Mitchells Plain, families are increasingly affected by domestic violence. Although it is impossible to know exactly how many domestic violence incidents occur, statistics released by South African Police Service (SAPS) Mitchells Plain indicate that in the financial year of 2012/13, they received 11 379 domestic violence complaints (Mposo n. pag). In 2016, SAPS Mitchells Plain stated that they were involved in approximately 300 domestic violence cases a month with Tafelsig being the area with the highest number of reported domestic violence cases (Mposo n. pag). According to the local community newspaper, *The Plainsman*, the year 2017 witnessed an increase of domestic violence complaints at the Mitchells Plain police station with methods of abuse including punching, biting, slapping and stabbing with beer bottles (Staff reporter n. pag). There is an expansive network of Non-Profit Organisations that provide domestic violence victim support, with most of them operating mainly in the Mitchells Plain area. These organisations include FAMSA (Family and Marriage Society of South Africa), MOSAIC, Mitchells Plain Crisis Line and Jireh. It is interesting to note that in 2013 SAPS launched the first domestic violence office in the Western Province, with Mitchells Plain as its location (Mposo n. pag). In terms of Mitchells Plain-based studies on domestic violence, Elzette Rousseau-Jemwa, Lynn Hendricks and Kerryn Rehse (2016) consider the use of psychological intervention for male perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV). By means of snowball sampling, they interviewed men who were currently seeking counselling for intimate partner violence. An array of themes arose in the discussions with some of the men stating that when they were involved in heated arguments with their partners, they could not communicate properly which is why they relied on violence (Rousseau-Jemwa, Hendricks and Rehse 133). The researchers also found that a violent reaction may occur due to the individual holding onto frustration connected to his past or a prior incident in the relationship (Rousseau-Jemwa, Hendricks and Rehse 134). The conclusions reached support the argument that many factors contribute to the problem of intimate partner violence such as gender roles, memories and incidents, and childhood exposure to violence, which inadvertently affects the domestic situation of learners.

A discussion on social ills relevant to Mitchells Plain demands an overview of illicit substance use. A major government-sponsored survey investigated the use of illicit substances amongst high school learners in the Western Cape. Their findings indicate that the most commonly used substances were tobacco, alcohol and cannabis (Morojele et al.

2013). Similarly, a recent study focusing on Mitchells Plain high school learners confirmed the findings of the survey by indicating that pro-community norms regarding the use of alcohol and cigarettes result in these substances being the most prevalent amongst learners in the area (Hamdulay and Mash 88). Also, they found higher prevalence rates of alcohol use by Mitchells Plain high school learners in comparison to other local countries such as Tanzania and Zimbabwe (Hamdulay and Mash 88). Furthermore, an additional concerning finding is that learners abusing substances in Mitchells Plain are considerably younger than their peers in European countries (Hamdulay and Mash 88). Mitchells Plain is notoriously linked to the use of crystal methamphetamine (Hamdulay and Mash 88). The effects of the use of crystal methamphetamine include impaired mental health, physical health and promulgates a higher probability of committing violence and engaging in crime due to a loss of inhibition (Hobkirk, Watt, Myers, Skinner, and Mead 2). Some critics assert the existence of a cyclical connection between interpersonal violence and substance use (Hobkirk et al. 10). Engaging in the use of illicit substances causes a likelihood of engaging in interpersonal violence and ironically, the perpetrator reverts to substances to cope with the violence. In this way, substance abuse and violence complement each other.

The community social sphere affects the high school learner which is why attention needs to be shone on Mitchells Plain's relationship with gangsterism. Recent figures show that there are approximately 130 gangs operating in Cape Town with an estimated population of 100 000 members (Wegner, Behardien, Loubser, Ryklief and Smith 54). A frightening statistic is that almost 70 percent of all crime in the Western Cape can be attributed to gangs (Bowers Du Toit 3). The most popular gangs operating in the Cape Flats include the Hard Livings, the Americans, Sexy Boys, Naughty Boys and Mongrels (Bowers Du Toit 3). Why young people join gangs has been the theme of many published studies. Wegner and others explored this question and found that the participants interviewed reported seeking a sense of belonging, proving their maleness and joining for basic survival purposes (57). A factor which increases the hold of gangs on communities is that gangsters possess high ranking social power which they in turn use to threaten and coerce (Bowers Du Toit 5). Alleyne and Wood state that other factors contributing to the thriving existence of gangs include decaying social structures and low self-esteem (424-425). As a consequence of gang violence, it is not uncommon for schools in Mitchells Plain to shut down for weeks due to ongoing gang violence in the community. The Daily Maverick reported that in 2015, 12 000 learners in the Western Cape were unable to attend school due to gang violence in the communities (Van Der Merwe n. pag). Similarly, in July 2018, Voice of the Cape reported that three schools

located in Beacon Valley, Mitchells Plain shut their doors in one week due to gang-related shootings (n. pag). The Mitchells Plain school where I taught had its fair share of gangsterism culminating with the murder of a matriculant- an alleged gangster. In August 2017, the Mitchells Plain police station commander Brigadier was quoted saying that the most active gang-infested areas in Mitchells Plain are Rocklands and Eastridge (Obose and Palm). Interestingly, as mentioned previously, the schools which provide the data for this research project are situated in Rocklands and Eastridge respectively. Moreover, one of the featured schools in this study, High School A, situated in Rocklands, has faced tremendous gang-related challenges. In 2015, IOL News reported on a Western Cape Education Department initiative which stationed police officers, or school resource officers, in 18 at-risk schools in the Western Cape (Fredericks n. pag). The social ills discussed are only a few of the many contextual struggles Mitchells Plain residents encounter on a daily basis. Due to the constraints of the scope of the thesis, a full discussion of the challenges is not possible.

A brief history of South African education



The language problem

As the thesis involves the examination of English Home Language poetry, it is important to understand the nature of language in education policies as it has always been a contentious issue. It is widely believed that English, as a language, was propagated in South Africa with the appearance of the British settlers of 1795 in the Cape (Bekker 140). The subsequent arrival of the British settlers of 1820 in the Eastern Cape initiated a linguistic mixing process resulting in a new dialect of English known as “Cape English” (Bekker 140- 141). The second period in the development of English in South Africa occurred when British settlers colonised Natal in 1840-1850 (Bekker 141). The linguist Bekker asserts that these settlers were of a more sophisticated class than their previous counterparts, and this impacted the development of the language (Bekker 141). Arguably, the most important language in modern South Africa is English, owing to it being the language of trade and industry (Alexander 3). Language as a tool is most powerful as it contributes to individual and group identities through culture and social interaction (Alexander 3). Alexander postulates that in any society, people who desire to be successful and competent need to attempt to utilise and learn the dominant language of that specific society as it is considered the language of

power (Alexander 3). A phenomenon fairly unique to South Africa is that most Black South Africans are bilingual as they communicate in their African first language at home and in the community sphere but they are aware that these languages do not necessarily equal success and cannot be pursued for business or educational purposes (Alexander 4-5). Consequently, they are inadvertently pushed to learn and become proficient in English. Alexander terms this condition as “static maintenance syndrome” as it reflects their loss of linguistic and cultural power (4). The focus now shifts to language in education. Owing to South Africa’s cultural and economic diversity, many learners come from a home where more than one language is spoken (Weideman, Du Plessis and Steyn 2). A reasonable example would be a high school learner whose father’s mother tongue is Sesotho, and whose mother’s mother tongue is Xhosa, yet he attends an English medium school where he studies English Home Language. These learners also perhaps do not use their language of instruction after school hours (Weideman, Du Plessis and Steyn 2). As a result of the country’s history of Apartheid, English and Afrikaans, as opposed to African languages, have always been given preference as languages utilised in teaching and learning at schools across South Africa (Postma and Postma 43). Postma and Postma further argue that when one learns a new language, they engage in the ontological process of meaning-making with the outside world (44). Education can therefore be viewed as a means to guide them through this process (Postma and Postma 44). However, students who speak African languages in the home, but struggle with English as the language of teaching and learning cannot to a certain degree, engage in proper meaning-making with their social environment (Postma and Postma 44). The researchers further argue that by denying Black learners the opportunity to be taught in their home language, the system is effectively forcing these learners to adhere and conform to Western cultural ideals (Postma and Postma 44).

The anomaly of the Black learner with a linguistically-conflicted profile is mentioned as it may be a limiting factor in the present study when considering the performance of some learners in the English Home Language class. In accordance with the Bantu Education Act of 1953, the learner’s home language was utilised as the medium of instruction up until Standard 6 or Grade 8 (de Wet and Wolhuter 365). Afrikaans and English were deemed compulsory for all learners from Sub A or Grade 1 onwards (de Wet and Wolhuter 365). There was a bit of divergence in Standard 7 or Grade 9 as English and Afrikaans were used in teaching, on a 50 to 50 scale (de Wet and Wolhuter 365). Naturally, many Blacks felt that the government’s language policy was an effort to restrain and discriminate (de Wet and Wolhuter 365). They were of the opinion that studying in Afrikaans, the language of their

oppressor, was completely inappropriate (Ndimande 24). These issues of Bantu Education will be re-addressed shortly.

Christian National Education (1948)

A discussion on Apartheid education demands an overview of Christian National Education (CNE). In 1948, Christian-centered education was established as law in South African schools and the hidden motive was to support the government's racist policies such as the notion of the separate development of the races (Ntshoe 63). The policy document of Christian National Education contained radical, Calvinistic philosophical stances as justification as to why South Africans should be separated according to culture, race and ethnicity both in terms of physical schools and education systems (Ntshoe 63). For example, the policy document contends that separate schooling is vital because each race has their own culture, language, history and religion (Ntshoe 63). In order to support the development of separate demarcated residential communities, it was argued that every nation has its own land which has been provided by God (Ntshoe 63). Ntshoe states that this particular statement of Christian National Education promoted the notion that the White Afrikaner is the chosen race by God (63).

A challenging concern is that during this period, all curriculum content had to uphold the tenets of Christian Nationalism (Ashley 21). Geography was utilised to promote patriotism and a yearning to defend South Africa's borders should the need arise (Ashley 22). The subject of History was almost completely Christian-based as learners were taught about the biography of Jesus Christ (Ashley 22). The government believed that an understanding of the life of Jesus Christ would only promote patriotism and nationalism (Ashley 22). Learners were taught less world History and more South African History and the participation and influence of the Afrikaner on South African affairs was highlighted as opposed to that of Blacks (Ashley 22). When studying literature, materials were only selected if they fulfilled the agenda of the government by moulding polite, obedient individuals (Ashley 22). The ascension to the top of the country's political ranks by the National Party, an Afrikaner Nationalist party, in 1948 enabled the state to push Christian National Education (Ashley 12). Tertiary institutions were not immune to the implementation of this exclusive, racist ideology as the policy document states that university and college staff must hold Christian Nationalist views and that in these institutions, the principles and agenda of Christian National Education must flourish (Brodie 159). The suppression of the education of Blacks was made national law during 1948 to 1980 with the Bantu Education Act (1953), the Extension of Universities

Act (1959), Education and Training Act (1970), and the Coloured Persons Education Act (1963) (Ashley 12).

The Bantu Education Act (1953)

When the Bantu Education Act was formulated, the principal aim was to create an education system which would promote an advantageous situation for Whites in South Africa (Wolpe and Unterhalter 4). Uppermost important to this was the segregation of the labour force. In other words, the aim was to continue promoting and ensuring that Blacks were only employable as hard labourers and not for any other profession readily available to Whites (Wolpe and Unterhalter 4). By keeping Blacks on the lower rung of the job sector, the Apartheid government's belief systems and ideologies would be reinforced (Wolpe and Unterhalter 4). The passing of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 served these racist aims by the Apartheid government, including ensuring that the education of Blacks be restricted in order for the education system to produce Black labourers to serve White masters (Wolpe and Unterhalter 4). In addition to this, it was believed that Blacks should be psychologically groomed to accept an inferior position in South Africa, which is exemplified in a quotation by Mokubung Nkomo who contends that Bantu Education sought to “socialize black students so that they can accept the social relations of apartheid as natural. That is, to accept the supposed superiority of whites and their own ‘inferiority’ ” (2).

It is important to note that during the years of Bantu Education, the government provided state of the art facilities and resources to White schools whilst excluding Black schools (Wolpe and Unterhalter 7). These significant differences are still visible today as demonstrated in the eroding buildings, teacher-to-learner ratio and lack of facilities (Wolpe and Unterhalter 7). Ndimande agrees by stating that despite recent efforts by the government to provide financial assistance to poorer schools in order to remedy the inequalities produced by Bantu Education, major differences with formerly privileged schools remain (25).

Harold Wolpe in his paper, “Education and Social transformation: Problems and Dilemmas” (1992) argues that there existed three general concerns by opposing parties in the challenges against Bantu Education (6). Firstly, education is considered a basic human right as outlined in the Freedom Charter and should be free and compulsory for all children under 18 years of age (Wolpe 5-6). The second concern was the notion that the curriculums of Science and the Humanities should amalgamate (Wolpe 6). The final and possibly most striking concern which greatly influenced the climate of South Africa at the time was the belief that people should utilise education, with its political tendencies as a vehicle for

transformation in society (Wolpe 6). These grievances or concerns were contained in the ANC Statement of Education Principles of 1978 and were further emphasised at the second National Education Crisis conference of 1986 which championed the cause of education as an usher to a new dawn in South African education and society (Wolpe 4). Wolpe postulates that the outward rejection of Bantu Education in the 1980s was executed on the grounds that a new education system be a total contrast to everything Bantu Education posited - non-racial, non-sexist and democratic (Wolpe 4). After the final decline of Apartheid in 1994, the Department of Basic Education, then known as the Ministry of Education, sought to eradicate any semblance of Apartheid's racially-based education by implementing three curriculum reforms (Govender 2). The reforms addressed racially-based themes and subject matters and implemented the concept and practice of continuous assessment (Govender 2). The post-Apartheid curriculums were as follows: Curriculum 2005 (C2005) which was implemented in 1997, Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) from 2002, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) which began in 2007 and finally, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement which has been in effect since 2012 (Govender 2)

The advantages of experiencing poetry

This thesis explores poetry to seek a deeper understanding of a learner's social identification with the literary text. Poetry is arguably a genre that requires no defence but in the interest of the thesis, I will discuss a brief history of English poetry coupled with a viable definition of poetry and follow this with certain valid standpoints as to why reading poetry is of great benefit to one. Andrew Sanders's *The Short Oxford History of English Literature* (1994) produces a structured timeline to illustrate the historical development of English poetry over the past centuries. The reader follows the movement of literature from the stages of Old English, Medieval, Renaissance and Reformation, to the Revolution, Eighteenth Century period, Romantic Period and the Modernism and Postmodernism phases. One can deduce that similar to the emergence of reader response theory, different stages of literature development were influenced by a multitude of factors such as societal changes, paradigm shifts and simply as reactions against long-held traditions and beliefs.

It is a rather complicated task to attempt to define poetry but the following definition is considered the most fitting in support of the thesis. Christopher Brumfort and Ronald Carter in *Literature and Language Teaching* (1986) posit the notion of an enlightening experience when reading poetry. They further write that the literature curriculum comprises

of two stages, with the experience being the initial stage and the reader's explanation of their experience is considered the latter stage (31). This definition is in agreement with the reader response standpoint that a reader engages in a transactional conversation with the text (Probst 7). I believe this kind of reader response-themed definition is the most appropriate yet often neglected definition of poetry or literature. I acknowledge that many South African learners struggle to participate in a transactional engagement with a poem and the particular reasons should be explored but do not fit the particular cope of this thesis. The thesis scrutinises a reader response engagement with adolescents and it is interesting to note that the aforementioned reader response theorist, Robert E. Probst, expresses that the adolescent is the "ideal reader" of literature (Probst 4). According to him, adolescents are wholly interested in themselves and this quality propels them to draw connections between their various relationships, and all facets life has to offer such as love, hatred, work, school and death (4). He believes this psychological make-up enables them to be more open to experiencing literature as they feel a desire to critically engage with the author, literary characters, the world, as well as their own peers (5).

One of the most celebrated English poets, John Keats, continually wrote to family and colleagues about the profound and therapeutic effect of poetry. His work has been explored in classrooms worldwide and even formed part of the Grade 12 English Home Language syllabus from 2012 until 2016. As Keats expressed in a famous letter to John Hamilton Reynolds in February 1818, "Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself, but with its subject" (cited in Forman 81). He further states that when feeling ill and anxious, writing poetry brought him the greatest comfort and peace (cited in Forman 391). In a letter to his publisher John Taylor, Keats confesses that poetry should contain the poet's highest level of intellect and should overflow with beauty which leaves the reader gasping for breath (cited in Forman 93). Interestingly, poetry has always been the focus of humanities-based research journals yet there has been a recent unexpected trend in scientific research regarding the examination of the emotional and behavioural effects of poetry on the individual. Eugen Wassiliwizky and others in, "The Emotional Power of Poetry: Neural Circuitry, Psychophysiology and Compositional Principle" (2017) employ psycho-physiological and neuroscientific techniques to discover more about how a poem may affect a reader's emotions and the brain's pleasure centre. The frequency of how research participants experienced goosebumps while being read poetry was significant as all the participants in the study experienced them (Wassiliwizky et al. 1231). When investigating which sections of the poem caused these goosebumps, they discovered that there was a definite pattern in certain parts, such as the end

of a stanza, and the end of a poem (Wassiliwizky et al. 1235). They interestingly conclude that a poem is a strong emotional tool that is directly linked to the reward centre of the brain (Wassiliwizky et al. 1238). Unfortunately, due to the common, rigid single method of reading poetry in schools, as well as a lack of exposure in adolescent years, many people equate reading or writing poetry as unfavourable activities (Wassiliwizky et al. 1239). Wassiliwizky and others acknowledge that poetry has the capability to transcend cultural and racial barriers to unite people (1239). A similar psychological study by Awel Vaughan- Evans, Robert Trefor, Llion Jones, Peredur Lynch, Manon W. Jones and Guillaume Thierry in “Implicit Detection of Poetry Harmony by the Naïve Brain”, (2016) is fascinating because it shows the depths of the reach of poetry and how it is appreciated by the unconscious part of one’s mind.

They explore event-related brain potentials (ERP) conjured by the presence of final words written in a traditional, precise Welsh form of poetry known as Cynghanedd (1). In this ancient form of poetry, consonants are repeated which are linked to quaint stress sequences (Vaughan-Evans et al. 2) The study utilised sentences which either conformed to, or violated, the strict principles of Cynghanedd (Vaughan-Evans et al. 2). The sample population consisted of twenty-five native Welsh speakers, who possessed no preconceived education on the traditional Welsh poetry form (Vaughan-Evans et al.2). The ERP results show that when the research participants had identified the pattern of Cynghanedd present in the poem, their brain perceived these as “good” (Vaughan-Evans et al.4) The researchers conclude that these results indicate that individuals may be able to sense and detect poetic rules, even without prior exposure on the matter (Vaughan- Evans et al. 6). Most importantly, they state that the harmonic nature of poetry has an effect on the human brain which is not detectable by conscious methods of analysis (Vaughan- Evans et al. 6). “Poetry therapy” is a legitimate psychological practice that gained traction in the United States of America in the 1960s and today, there are official training courses for individuals wishing to qualify in this unique realm of psychology (Ramsey-Wade and Devine 283). Researchers Ramsey-Wade and Devine even note the existence of a peer-reviewed *Journal of Poetry Therapy* (283). An elucidation of the goals of poetry therapy reveals the client should attempt to reach a deeper awareness of themselves through embracing poetry (Gorelick 118). The client will hopefully become more creative and be able to integrate well in social situations with others (Gorelick 118). Additional goals include becoming a beacon of emotional catharsis as well as learning to adapt to change in any format (Gorelick 118). The concluding results of Ramsey-Wade and Devine’s research on the appropriateness and benefits of the usage of poetry therapy to treat anorexia nervosa patients indicate that this method of rehabilitative approach is successful. They evidence this point by partly alluding to a major

study by Nicholas Mazza where he postulates that participants who are engaged in poetry therapy follow a structured workshop involving reading or listening to poems and responding with their instinctual feelings which is very much a reader response approach (Ramsey-Wade and Devine 289). The group facilitator then links the group's varied reactions to the current depressing life challenges and offers problem solving techniques (Ramsey-Wade and Devine 290). The final step in the programme is the collaborative composing of a poem (Ramsey-Wade and Devine 290). Ramsey-Wade and Devine state that this method of practising poetry therapy is one that can be utilised in various applications in either group or individual settings but they also concede that more research on the study of anorexia nervosa and poetry therapy is needed (290). Debbie McCulliss's fascinating study, "Poetic Inquiry and Multidisciplinary Qualitative Research" (2013) proffers an exploration of whether poetry can be employed by qualitative researchers to aid the extraction and analysis of gathered data (83). A compelling fact to consider is that this kind of practice has proven to be successful over the past decades (McCulliss 83). McCulliss contends that poetry is the perfect and appropriate vehicle for a qualitative research enquiry because it enables the researcher to tear down walls and access the essence of an individual's lived experience (83). For example, different cultures can be tasked with composing poetry in order to offer insight into the inner workings of their minds and culture (McCulliss 83). Another technique would be to encourage research participants to compile a current poetry diary where they write down any responses, feelings, or standout lines of poetry (McCulliss 103). A great benefit is that poetic techniques can even be applied to fields outside of social sciences such as the business and medical fields in order to elicit insight into shared traits belonging to an individual or group (McCulliss 84).

Helen Gardner's *In Defence of the Imagination* (1984) offers many solid reasons as to why poetry is advantageous to the reader. She believes that since most literature reflects reality, it (literature) is teeming with moral ideas and concepts (37). By engaging with these literature works, we question our own moral standpoints and learn more about ourselves and each other (Gardner 37). Also, when the speaker's moral stance is different to the reader's, this invites discussion where they sympathise or condemn (Gardner 37). Gardner further states that when one is engaging with poetry, one enjoys liberty from daily worries, pressures, anxieties of the everyday aspects of human life, even just for a moment (44). Furthermore, the reader experiences amusement whether it is in the form of light verse or sublime poetry (Gardner 44). To summarise, the benefits of reading and engaging with poetry are boundless and are mostly linked to the sharing of morals, understanding the

subjective world of others and of course, acting as a form of therapy. In an interesting move, as evidenced, even scientific research has supported the stance for poetry.

Scope of the themes present in recent studies on the South African high school classroom

It is important to gain a deeper understanding on the state, quality and challenges of secondary education in South Africa as the thesis research question centres on Grade 12 learner identification. Once one understands the local classroom, it will be easier to process and locate meaning in the results obtained in the present research project.

1. Teacher-centered themes

South Africa's historical and present racial context has been the background of studies conducted in the local academic sphere. Most recently however, South African education studies focused on factors influencing the educator's ability to teach effectively, school discipline and assessment feedback. Norma Nel and Heléne Müller's study, "The Impact of Teachers' Limited English Proficiency on English Second Language Learners in South African Schools" (2010) explores how the teacher's limited knowledge of the English language impacts the education of English First Additional Language learners. As part of the data collection, the researchers analysed learner and teacher portfolios and found that there were numerous written errors made by both parties which led them to the conclusion that these learners were replicating grammar errors as used by their educators (Nel and Müller 638). Furthermore, the teachers in the study were confident about their English proficiency but were awkward about English being the language of teaching and learning (Nel and Müller 646). An important takeaway is that the rural setting of the study highlights the challenge of large class sizes and the researchers emphasise that academic information is passed down to the learner through the act of engaging in language communication and poor English skills by the teacher hinders this process (Nel and Müller 646).

Learner discipline as well as the agency and skills of school governing bodies in implementing a learner code of conduct is discussed by Raj Mestry and Jan Khumalo in "Governing Bodies and Learner Discipline: Managing Rural Schools in South Africa through a Code of Conduct" (2012). The study undertook to establish the role of school governing bodies in the development of a learner code of conduct and how the code of conduct is implemented in order to maintain discipline (Mestry and Khumalo 100). These findings bear

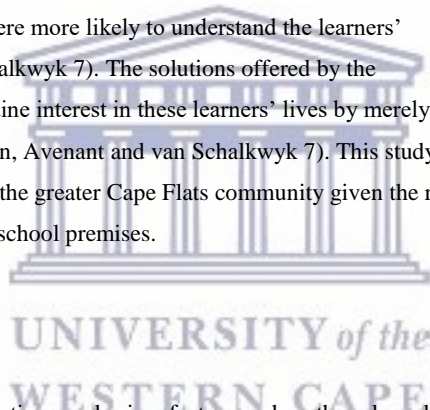
relevance to the study as a thorough reader response engagement in an English lesson will be hindered by unruly learners who cause a disturbance. The data collection occurred by means of focus groups and also by examining essential school documents such as the code of conduct, records of disciplinary infringements and courses of action taken against offending learners (Mestry and Khumalo 100). The findings indicate that most school governing body members are not well-versed in the legalities of school discipline (Mestry and Khumalo 102). Many research participants concede that they are not knowledgeable about school issues with some not even having a Grade 12 certificate (Mestry and Khumalo 102). The concern of corporal punishment was also raised as research participants reveal that they know it is illegal yet still a standard practice in some schools (Mestry and Khumalo 103). Researchers Petro du Preez and Cornelia Roux were also intrigued by the issue of discipline in South African schools. Their study, “Human Rights Values or Cultural Values? Pursuing Values to Maintain Positive Discipline in Multicultural Schools” (2010) analyses schools with a multicultural population and how discipline in these schools should have human rights values at their foundation. Discourse analysis was utilised to process the collected data and the researchers were interested in the appearance of consistent themes in the participants’ answers (du Preez and Roux 19). The conclusions indicate that people tend to use a particularistic approach to mould discipline methods as they are of the opinion that the importance of cultural values increase as one ages in an effort to uphold traditionalist beliefs (du Preez and Roux 23). This approach, however, can prove to be challenging when teaching a classroom of a multicultural population (du Preez and Roux 23).

A 2016 study by Petro Marais, “ ‘We Can’t Believe What We See’: Overcrowded Classrooms through the Eyes of Student Teachers”, focuses on overcrowded classrooms and how this affects teachers as well as learners. The study’s purpose is to investigate the perceptions of student teachers towards teaching in overcrowded classrooms. Prominent theorists, Piaget and Vygotsky’s social learning theories are utilised as theoretical frameworks (Marais 3). He acknowledges that overcrowded classrooms have become part of the fabric of South African education and that Universities need to prepare incoming educators for this problem (1). The literature review presents a collection of studies emphasising challenges of overcrowded classrooms such as educators’ inability to have a hold on discipline and failure to complete lessons in the allocated time (Marais 2-3). The questions used for the data collection concerned student teachers’ opinions on positive and negative experiences faced whilst teaching in this type of classroom environment (Marais 1). A study of this nature is particularly interesting to Mitchells Plain as classrooms are typically

packed to capacity with an average of 45 learners in one class. As previously mentioned, the inequalities of Apartheid education have resulted in disadvantaged schools having an imbalanced educator to learner ratio. Along with overcrowded classrooms, another concerning issue among South African high school learners is illicit substance use which is investigated by Karen Lynn Walton, J Avenant and I van Schalkwyk in “Educators’ Experiences of their Relationships with Adolescents Involved in Drug Use” (2016). The technique of purposive sampling led to the interview of sixteen research participants who are educators at a socially-challenging suburb in Cape Town (Walton, Avenant and van Schalkwyk 3). The conclusions reached indicate that the learners’ substance use, which caused a myriad of behaviour problems such as disrespect to authority and truancy, considerably impacted the quality of the relationship with their educators. (Walton, Avenant and van Schalkwyk 5). Also, the interviewed teachers expressed that they are under extreme pressure to act as teachers, social workers and psychologists (Walton, Avenant and van Schalkwyk 5). The researchers found that the educators who had personal experiences of family members engaging in substance use were more likely to understand the learners’ circumstances (Walton, Avenant and van Schalkwyk 7). The solutions offered by the educators highlighted a need to behold a genuine interest in these learners’ lives by merely actively listening and developing trust (Walton, Avenant and van Schalkwyk 7). This study is of particular relevance to Mitchells Plain and the greater Cape Flats community given the rise of illicit substance use by learners on and off school premises.

2. Learner-centered themes

The following research in South African education emphasises factors such as the role and agency of the learner, in terms of their attitudes, privileges, leadership capabilities, literacy and likelihood to commit violence at school. Firstly, Jyothi Chabilall conducted a qualitative approach in “Educators’ Roles in Developing Adolescent HIV/AIDS Knowledge and Attitudes within School Culture” (2012) in order to investigate how Muslim learners’ perceptions and feelings towards HIV/AIDS is influenced by educators and the school context at large. The data was gathered by means of semi-structured individual interviews with teachers at different schools regarding their opinions on the teaching and learning of HIV/Aids at their specific schools (Chabilall 121). Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory drove the research approach (Chabilall 124). The interviewed educators indicated that they feel responsible as role models and are strongly motivated to educate and encourage informed



consent by using the curriculum content provided by the Department of Basic Education (Chabilall 129).

Another similar study which links the learner's satisfaction of needs to the educator, was conducted by Surette van Staden and Roel Bosker in "Factors that Affect South African Reading Literacy Achievement: Evidence from pre PIRLS 2011" (2014). The aim is to establish which factors contribute to successful literacy levels amongst South African learners (van Staden and Bosker 1). They posit that reading is an essential early childhood skill as it encompasses every aspect of a child's life, in and outside of the classroom (van Staden and Bosker 1). They would therefore be active members of their communities and engage in everyday experiences such as buying a loaf of bread (van Staden and Bosker 1). Crucial factors which affect a child's reading skills are their internal motivation to read as well as their self-esteem and perception they have of their own knowledge and values (van Staden and Bosker 2). The theoretical framework employed in the study is Carroll's Model of School Learning and questionnaires as well as results of the pre PIRLS 2011 reading examination (van Staden and Bosker 3). The researchers argue that a single definite approach to increase reading proficiency is that educators and parents should encourage learners to read at all available times and not just in the English classroom (van Staden and Bosker 8).

Student leadership is the focus of an article by Edith Phaswana, "Learner Councillors' Perspectives on Learner Participation" (2010) which emphasises the importance of bringing the learners' opinions in their own words into the research, which is why the researchers adopted a qualitative research methodology (Phaswana 111). The findings of the study reveal various positive outcomes of being a member of a school Representative Council of Learners such as the absorption of unique and valuable skills which help adolescents currently and in the workplace (Phaswana 114). These skills include how to handle stressful, conflicting clashes within a group situation (Phaswana 111). Another important finding of the data collection is that the learners felt that they developed acute listening skills which assisted them into taking other people's opinions into account. (Phaswana 115). A recommendation of the study is that school governance by learners needs to be readily-promoted to all learners, except Grade 12s and that learners and adults need to converge to problem solve school-related issues (Phaswana 120). The research highlights that social learning theories assist in reaching the goals relevant to learner school governance (Phaswana 120). A relevant issue to Mitchells Plain, namely school violence, is investigated by Kalie Barnes, Susette Brynard and Corene de Wet in "The Influence of School Culture

and School Climate on Violence in Schools of the Eastern Cape Province” (2012). Learners ranging from Grade 10 to Grade 12 across thirty schools in the Eastern Cape were the research participants who engaged with the questionnaire (Barnes, Brynard and de Wet 73). Quantitative data analytical methods were employed to process the data with school culture and school climate acting as independent variables, coupled with school violence as the dependant variable (Barnes, Brynard and de Wet 74).

Zayd Waghid (2016) conducted similar research aimed at exploring learner development. He examines how the distribution of learner privileges, identities and opportunities can be corrected by pedagogical means. The researcher contends that post-Apartheid education concerns goals of cultivating social justice in the classroom (Waghid 1). A method to achieve this is by employing pedagogic strategies in education tasks (Waghid 1). The study utilises a Grade 11 Economics class as the sample population and their Facebook activities in order to promote social justice amongst learners in the classroom context (Waghid 1). The main themes of Economics which Waghid had in mind were, sustainable development, equality and the structure and maturity of the economy (Waghid 4). He showed the research participants three different films and their discussion comments were analysed on Facebook through discourse analysis. The study concludes that the learners offered valuable and meaningful feedback on the films, all in relation to their Economics curriculum (Waghid 4). A learner writing-based study was executed by Kristy Winzker, Frenette Southwood and Kate Huddleston in “Investigating the Impact of SMS Speak on the Written Work of English First Language and English Second Language High School Learners” (2009) as they sought to ascertain whether SMS (short message service) affects the writing of learners. They have analysed the learners’ written work and found that there were numerous features of SMS language such as spelling mistakes, overload of punctuation and constant use of emojis (Winzker, Southwood and Huddleston 10). The study concludes that SMS language features were prevalent in the written work, indicating a considerable level of impact, which could be explained by the notion that most adolescents engage in SMS language on their phones (Winzker, Southwood and Huddleston 13). However, there is no need for great anxiety regarding the future of written English in South Africa (Winzker, Southwood and Huddleston 13). Researchers Pillay and Di Terlizzi (2009) examine challenges faced by learners who transferred from a mainstream schooling environment to a LSEN school. The study has positive findings for the idea of Inclusive Education, but highlights the challenges South Africa faces in making Inclusive Education more readily available to more learners. To conclude this section, research on South African education has mainly focused on the issue of discipline and also the role of the teacher’s influence in the

school context. Individual research attention is also placed on the learner's well-being and literacy development. The next focus of the thesis will be on the theoretical framework of reader response theories through the lens of the social environment by initialising the discussion with a brief history of its origins.

A brief history of reader response theory

Formalism as a precursor

Reader response theory emerged as a direct critical reaction to formalism's successful theory called new criticism which gained support after World War 1 (My Van 3). This theory views the reader as an absent role player in literary interpretation as all meaning is located in the text itself (Webster 28). Celeste Resh's "Experimenting with Response to Literature" (1987) agrees that within new criticism, interpretation concerns an objective truth and the reader is unable to resist or reject this standard interpretation (15). The objective truth is derived by engaging in a close reading or analysis of the text (Mailloux 39). In other words, the reader endeavours to seek the single 'correct' meaning of the text by analysing the text's structure, images and themes (My Van 3). Unfortunately the new criticism approach has been widely employed in classrooms locally and worldwide since its inception. Researcher My Van reveals in "The Relevance of Literary Analysis to Teaching Literature in the EFL Classroom" (2009) that her fellow educators were dismayed with the approach as students who rely too much on the authority of the educator in the construction of meaning instead of considering their own subjective meaning perform poorly when assessed on language skills (My Van 3). As a result, students develop a negative relationship with literature as there is limited capacity for understanding and appreciation (My Van 3).

The rise of reader response theory

Reader response theory rose to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s as a reaction against new criticism as literary theorists and critics began to stress the all-important role of the reader (Beach 17). As Jane Tompkins elucidates in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (1980), the newfound belief was that meaning was generated by the reader and not simply waiting to be discovered in the text (223). The reader's interpretation is dependent on a variety of external and internal elements, which leads to the acceptance of

multiple responses (Webster 28). Louise Rosenblatt, as stated in *Literature as Exploration* (1968), perceives the reading process as a transactional phenomenon involving the reader, the text, the particular time, and context (2). Importantly, she goes on to state that personal and social factors contribute to the reader's meaning-making process (Rosenblatt 7). The centrality of the learner's social and cultural background is a main tenet of reader response theory and forms the foundation of my research question.

Furthermore, Rosenblatt's paper "The Literary Transaction: Evocation and Response" (1982) clearly distinguishes between efferent and aesthetic reading. The efferent reader is focused on manually extracting information from the text such as textbooks and newspapers where there is no space for interpretation or reflection (269-270). This is usually the type of reading currently deployed in the classroom. However, aesthetic reading emphasises the reading experience as the senses are activated and the reader conjures up past experiences, cultural ideologies, subjective viewpoints and emotions (Rosenblatt 270). The purpose of aesthetic reading is the event or experience, rather than merely reading for the sake of extracting information (Rosenblatt 270). This transactional relationship between the reader and the text ensures that the reader is constantly aware of the literary text by absorbing and noticing all of the words on the paper. Rosenblatt states that the aesthetic reader feels the words as containing auditory and visual features (29). The poet carefully selects the words of a poem and during aesthetic reading, the reader alters the experience of the poem by direct interaction with the words (Rosenblatt 53). Rosenblatt's *The Literature, the Text, the Poem* (1978) offers more suggestions to explain what the reader experiences during aesthetic reading. She posits that the reader engages in intense contemplation whilst encountering the literary text (30). However, this form of contemplation varies from the types of contemplation usually associated with philosophical theories of the appreciation of art, such as the standpoint that contemplation is placed on the views of the observer or audience or the belief that there is a psychologically-formed gap between the art work and the observer or audience (Rosenblatt 30). She believes that these theories of contemplation of art do not explain what is being contemplated and which kind of process unfolds during contemplation (30). Contemplation during aesthetic reading is marked by the attention on the active, colourful experience of the reader (Rosenblatt 30).

A text may cause different readers, or even the same reader, to engage in different experiences during multiple reading engagements (Rosenblatt 36). A book in the Bible may initially be read in an efferent manner but when the reader encounters it again, he may engage in aesthetic reading (Rosenblatt 36). Rosenblatt explains this phenomenon by evidencing a shift in the reader's attitude and desires (36). She encourages a social discussion of reading

impressions by contending that when a reader hears the opinions of others regarding a poem, it adds value and insight to the reader's own relationship with the same poem (146). Interestingly, she further argues that when a poem has a profound effect on the reader, he is motivated to share his viewpoint with other readers in an effort to try to make sense of the event (146). This social interaction encourages the intermingling of varying meanings, impressions, memories and experiences (Rosenblatt 146). Rosenblatt further argues that generally, the literary text has always been considered as a mode of communication between the author and the intended reader but this delineation needs to be eradicated as we should start viewing the text as a means of communication between different readers (146).

Different types of reader response theories

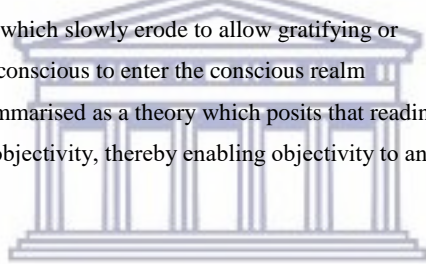
Subjective criticism

This psychologically-based reader response view is championed by David Bleich who believes that the factors influencing response are possibly age, sex, racial identity, and level of income (465). Further to this, reader response theorists Wanda Brookes and Susan Browne highlight the fact that Bleich also alludes to the notion that the reader's interpretation of a literary text is largely influenced by their personality characteristics and meaning is not located in the text itself (76). Bleich states in *Readings and Feelings: An Introduction to Subjective Criticism* (1975), that an individual's response to literature consists of two elements, "affect" and "association" (15). Affect refers to sudden, unprocessed emotions such as anger, love and jealousy (Bleich 15). The respondent usually experiences physical changes such as sweating and heart rate increase (Bleich 15). Association is similar to affect, but has more psychoanalytical underpinnings, as the reader is asked to make causal links based on their personal experiences (Bleich 16). Before or after the encounter with the text, the reader may write down his response which highlights his subjective interpretation (Resh 15). In a similar exploration of the reader's response, Mailloux alludes to the three stages of Bleich's theory. The first step is "symbolisation", which is the individual initial reading experience (Mailloux 43). The second step is "re-symbolisation" which includes the reader's attempt to understand the reading event that just occurred, where the readers write down their interpretations of the text (Mailloux 43). The final step is "negotiation" where readers share with each other what they have understood of the text and a communal meaning is created (Mailloux 45). Interestingly, subjective criticism's viewpoint is a departure from Rosenblatt who does not discuss ethnic

make-up as an influencing factor but rather personal and social elements as well as cultural practices (Mailloux 45).

Transactive criticism

Norman Holland's work is similar to Bleich's theory as he utilises psychology as the main premise of his reader response approach. Mailloux considers the theory to be a composite of ego psychology and remnants of formalism as the reader and text converge to create meaning (45). The main factor in interpretation is the reader's "identity themes" from which literary meaning is derived (Mailloux 45). The clash of different identity themes explains away a situation where readers argue about the messages or meanings of a literary text (Mailloux 45). A possible challenge to this theory is that readers with different racial identities might disagree on the meaning of a literary text (Mailloux 46). Holland, in "Unity Identity Self Text" (1975) posits a model for literary experience called the "DEFT" (defense-expectation-fantasy-transformation) (818). A reader encounters a text but their experience is limited by defence mechanisms which slowly erode to allow gratifying or pleasurable fantasies from the deep-seated unconscious to enter the conscious realm (Holland 83). Transactive criticism can be summarised as a theory which posits that reading is a process in which "subjectivity questions objectivity, thereby enabling objectivity to and shape subjectivity" (Holland 174).



Experiential reader response

The prominent literary critic Stanley Fish is in agreement with other reader response theorists as he argues two salient points. Firstly, the reader's presence is crucial to the act of reading (Fish 123). Secondly, meaning is created when the reading experience is influenced by "something other than itself, something outside its frame of reference" (Fish 143). He is alluding to the core of experiential reader response which is the concept that our world consists of a multitude of communities. Each community holds certain institutional directives for how its members should interpret the world (Fish 31-32). In his famous work, *Is There a Text in this Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (1980), Fish refers to the example of a student whose hand is raised during the lesson. The idea here is that someone who belongs to the educational interpretive community will view the action as a student wanting to ask a question, whereas someone from a political interpretive community would consider it a jubilant move of praise by an eager politically-minded follower (Fish 332-334). Fish utilises another example of a reader encountering

John Milton's "Lycidas" to illustrate the same point. The poem can be considered a pastoral poem composed by Milton (Fish 469). The terms "pastoral" and "composed by Milton" influence the reading's engagement of the text and Fish calls these factors "interpretive strategies" (Fish 470). These interpretive strategies influentially mould texts in the reading process by guiding the reading experience (Fish 470). According to Ruzbeh Babae and Iraj Montashery in "Stanley Fish with Respect to the Reader" (2012) which is an investigative study into the work of Fish, words and language are loaded with meaning derived from social contexts (Babae and Montashery 23). They argue the notion that interpretive communities are embedded in societies and act as the authorities of truth and power (Babae and Montashery 23). In this way, Fish's theory is a postmodern approach as there is no absolute, objective truth but rather truth as determined by different interpretive communities (Babae and Montashery 23).

A phenomenological reader response theory

Wolfgang Iser postulates that an understanding of the reading experience must include consideration for the literary text itself and the steps taken by the reader to respond to the text (279). These steps include a confluence of viewpoints, perspective and memories (Iser 283). He further elucidates that a literary work is brought to life when the reader and text meet and when the reader takes into account different meanings and points arising from the text as well as his own viewpoints, a response is generated (279-280). The reader becomes committed to the textual world as the events and characters of the text appear realistic even though they are far removed from the reader's own circumstances (Iser 282). This therefore means that the reader's imagination combines with the text to create a construction of this virtual world of the novel which will be further explained a bit later (Iser 283). Similar to Rosenblatt, Iser also attempts to clearly explain the reading process when multiple readings of the same text occur at different times by the same reader. When the reader encounters the text, he is confronted with different pieces and tries to connect the dots as it is in the reader's nature to search for links (285). A second reading encounter of the same text usually results in a different reading experience (Iser 285). Iser reveals that in every text, there exists a chronological series of events which slowly unfolds to the reader as his perspective changes (286). Also, with a second reading, the reader projects different value on the text compared to the first reading (Iser 286). In this reading, details that were glossed over or missed before, become apparent to the reader (Iser 286). In addition to this, the second reading offers a new, unique series of events (Iser 286). For

Iser, the virtual world of the text is created through these multiple readings and encounters with the text which in a manner, mirrors our experience of life as we move along in life by gaining new experiences through interactions and knowledge (Iser 286). To summarise, reader response theories view the reader as an agent of meaning-making and their past experiences, associations, viewpoints and especially their social context markedly influence how they approach a literary text.

Scope of studies on reader response theory in the English literature classroom

Most reader response studies investigate adolescents' reactions to novels or poetry and analyse their various responses. A few critics have decided to use a more modern, technological approach to the theory, with interesting results. A successful study consisting of a sample population of non-native English speakers was probed by Anthony Carlisle. The study, "Reading Logs: An Application of Reader Response Theory in ELT" involves 19 to 20 year old students in an English class who meticulously kept reader response reading logs whilst reading novels. In these reading logs, learners openly expressed their viewpoints and emotions (Carlisle 12). The aim of the study is to introduce these learners to a new approach of literature- one that is divorced from an efferent style of reading to more of an aesthetic style. The researchers note that the students had become accustomed to the efferent style as they merely read novels in order to walk away with information and authorial intent (Carlisle 13). Instead, students were encouraged to focus on the reading experience itself as well as their emotions, thoughts and connections to the literary text (Carlisle 13). The reading guideline comprised of questions which instructed students to recall any memories which sprang to mind whilst reading and comparisons between their own behaviour and actions to that of the characters in the novel (Carlisle 14). The findings indicate that these learners engaged in an energetic and excited manner with the texts. In the process, they grew as individuals possibly because they felt that their own opinions were validated and appreciated which in turn, led to a greater understanding of the literary texts (Carlisle 18). Most notably, their academic skills improved- namely reading and writing (Carlisle 18). Rose C. Reissman's "Leaving Out to Pull In: Using Reader Response to Teach Multicultural Literature" (1994) employs a unique strategy to teach multicultural literature to learners who hail from different ethnic backgrounds. She initialises the engagement by reading extracts from three multicultural literary texts aloud and asked the learners to ascertain the ethnicity of the author (Reissman 20). The responses are interesting and diverse as a Korean student indicated that the author must be Korean and another student was convinced the author was

Italian. (Reissman 20-21). Reissman strongly recommends the employment of reader response theory in the classroom as a method to teach students to engage with their own, as well as other cultures. In this manner, respect and appreciation is fostered amongst readers (Reissman 23).

Similarly, Lois P. Tucker espouses the advantageous rewards of reader response theory when utilised inside the English literature classroom. His article, "Liberating Students through Reader-Response Pedagogy in the Introductory Literature Course" (2000) provides useful, practical teaching strategies for educators. Observed benefits of a reader response approach to literature include enabling students to become active participants in the act of reading instead of passive observers (Tucker 199). Also, by sharing their individualised opinion, they are able to critically engage with the literary text because they are creating their own meaning (Tucker 199). Most notably, he contends that once these students leave the lesson, they are more confident and ferociously invested in the literary world of the characters or poem (Tucker 205). Keeping in line with a reader response focus on the social and cultural context of the reader, Sylvia Pantaleo explores the effects of a reader response study of a graphic novel. The article, "Revisiting Rosenblatt's Aesthetic Response through *The Arrival*" (2013) employs the theoretical framework of sociocultural theory (Pantaleo 127). A respondent in the study shows that a reader response engagement leads her to valuing the novel owing to her close readings and process of meaning-making (Pantaleo 132). Interestingly, Pantaleo emphasises that reader response application functions best when the reader reads at a slowed down pace in order to allow them to reflect on the literary text (Pantaleo 132). A rather unique perspective on reader response classroom application is tested in "The Reader, the Text, the Context: An Exploration of a Choreographed Response to Literature (1994)". Peter Smagorinsky and John Coppock decided to explore the medium of dance as a cultural and psychological method to allow students to express their response to a short story (9). In this unique process, the researchers indicate that the learners projected their personal and socio-cultural narratives into the meaning-making engagement through their choreographed dance (Smagorinsky and Coppock 19). These learners utilised kinaesthetic intelligence when physically portraying the relationships between characters (Smagorinsky and Coppock 19). The conclusion reached is that learners do not always have to produce written responses to literature but can also rely on dance as a socio-cultural method to express themselves and their interpretation of a literary text (Smagorinsky and Coppock 37). This particular finding may be relevant to South African cultural customs.

Practical educational strategies are offered by Robert E. Probst in “Reader-Response Theory and the English Curriculum” (1994) as he calls for the implementation of reader response theory in the English classroom. A good initial step is to make learners feel comfortable about voicing their own perspectives in class and that they have the ability to offer valuable input (Probst 42). Their opinions should never be rejected or undermined (Probst 42). In terms of these responses, they should be given adequate time to shape their answers by reflection and redrafting before they hear the opinions of the others in the group (Probst 42). Adolescents are too eager to dismiss their own answers and seek validation in group answers (Probst 42). It is the duty of the educator to connect certain responses whether they are similar or contrasting in order to teach students about the nature of varied responses which are each valid (Probst 44). Most importantly, Probst maintains that students need to be encouraged to openly share their opinions on themselves, their realities, their culture and their belief systems (Probst 44). He believes these techniques enable students to gain more insight into the literary text, their communities they occupy and society at large as they become active participants in the meaning-making process (Probst 44).

Implications of reader response theory on the ground level in the classroom are explored by research conducted by Gary Harfitt and Blanche Cu in “Actualizing Reader-Response Theory on L2 Teacher Training Programs” (2011). The researchers test reader response theory as a pedagogical methodology in English Second Language Grade 10 classrooms in Hong Kong. They acknowledge that an inherent obstacle for these learners is English poetry (Harfitt and Cu 94). The selected poems were mainly of a narrative style which covered topics such as relationships, in order to elicit creative, intense reactions from the students (Harfitt and Cu 96). The researchers rely heavily on Rosenblatt’s distinction between efferent and aesthetic reading as guidelines for the study. An initial step involved asking student teachers to share their views on the teaching of poetry, which largely reflected efferent reading (Harfitt and Cu 96). Owing to these preconceived notions of poetry, the student teachers were taught how to employ reader response theory in their lessons (Harfitt and Cu 100). The feedback from these student teachers was mainly positive except that that they were not prepared for the overwhelming array of responses generated by the learners, especially the ones of a sensitive nature such as child abuse (Harfitt and Cu 101).

Conclusions drawn from the research prove valuable to the thesis. The advantageous findings are that reader response theory should undoubtedly be utilised in the English classroom because it tests the learners’ language and oral skills (Harfitt and Cu 100). Also,

students develop as human beings and become culturally aware of their own culture and that of their peers (Harfitt and Cu 100).

Reader response studies focusing on the social environment of the individual

I will now focus on reader response theory studies conducted through a social environmental lens as it links to my research question even though this kind of scholarship has been limited. A few studies however, have been published regarding the cultural identity of the reader, when encountering a text that is similar to, or different to his own culture.

In this vein, Brett Blake argues in “‘Critical’ Reader Response in an Urban Classroom: Creating Cultural Texts to Engage Diverse Readers” (1998), that the classroom is constituted with learners of varying experiences, cultural backgrounds and abilities (239). He utilises the example of a Black girl who was frustrated with reading literature which wholly covered white people and the opposite sex (239). Furthermore, he calls for literature practices in classrooms to be more representative of all types of readers whose lives are influenced by different social and cultural backgrounds (239).

In agreement with Blake’s discussion on culture, Lawrence R. Sipe asserts in “Children’s Response to Literature: Author, Text, Reader, Context” (1999) that the readers’ cultural background and social context heavily influence their response to literature. Sipe’s viewpoints are key to research question and require expansion. He primarily conducts research involving children’s response to literature and his data collection leads to conclusions regarding the reader’s context (125). In terms of context, he examines factors of the reader’s social environment such as the immediate context, classroom community, non-school context, cultural background, and gender (125-126). When a classroom consists of a multicultural population, there is a multitude of different memories, views, traditions, and past experiences (Sipe 126). These elements are a great data source for a researcher, although the general culture of the classroom community may not be in synergy with the individual’s culture (Sipe 126). Sipe reiterates the sentiments of Rosenblatt and Blake by agreeing that this lack of cultural connection causes tension and a failure of identification (126). As an extension of this argument, he states that readers tend to adopt an outlook of resistance (123). To elucidate: a reader may encounter a text and during this transactional experience, they may accept or reject the text (Sipe 123). The acceptance or rejection could be for a variety of reasons, such as not agreeing with the worldviews presented, or the actions of a character (Sipe 123). When I was teaching Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* to Grade 10 English Home Language learners, at some points, I found that learners were dismayed by a character’s

actions and this subsequently led them to disliking the character and the play. On this note, Sipe refers to the arguments of French literary theorist and linguist, Roland Barthes, who in *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975), discusses the processes behind the reader's attitude and approach to reading. I will briefly outline the points by Barthes, which Sipe draws upon. According to Barthes, there is discernment between "plaisir" or "text of pleasure" and "jouissance" or "text of bliss" (14).

In plaisir, the reader realises their own life, culture and viewpoints are present in the text and this creates a state of elation and comfort (14). When a reader encounters a text that clashes with characteristics of their own identity, there is a great sense of discomfort and crisis which Barthes terms as "jouissance" (Barthes 14). Cynthia Lewis agrees with Blake and Sipe to a certain extent as she explores cultural identification in

"Critical Issues: Limits of Identification: the Personal, Pleasurable, and Critical" (2000), and underscores the importance the socio-political aspect of response. She goes on to state that if the reader encounters a character or textual world that is different to their own, identification is not possible (Lewis 263). However, this lack of identification leads to the reader being more self-aware of their own identity and the text (Lewis 263).

On the issue of cultural identification, Wanda Brooks and Susan Browne's study, "Towards a Culturally Situated Reader Response Theory" (2012) focuses on young "African American" learners' reactions and interpretations to African American literature. They seek to explore how a reader's ethnic make-up as well as their culture affect their interpretation with a culturally-saturated novel (Brooks and Browne 75-76). The researchers who interestingly, are mentees of Snipe, express that they have been researching reader response theory for over a decade and felt that there was a pressing need for culturally-based reader response studies (Brooks and Browne 76). The data collected in the study is grouped according to the cultural categories of ethnic group, community, family and peers (Brooks and Browne 78). The responses grouped in the ethnic group category are those in which the students reverted to their own ethnicity as a means of identification and understanding (Brooks and Browne 80). In this particular context, their status was historically-disadvantaged Blacks in the United States of America. Findings indicate that the learners internalised the stereotypes and perceptions of African Americans behaviour and personality as they attempted to rationalise and understand racial prejudice (Brooks and Browne 80). The responses in the community category also yield interesting observations as the learners attempted to relate the characters through their own community spheres (Brooks and Browne 81).

On a nearly-identical note, important socio-cultural theorisations are made by Lee Galda and Richard Beach as they contend that learners in a classroom arrive with an

accompaniment of social practices and discourses because they are members of social groups or communities which uphold these very practices (Galda and Beach 67). The process of a reader response engagement enables learners to navigate the literary text as a representation of a socio-cultural world as the characters present in the literary text are influenced by certain cultural beliefs, ideologies and societal customs (Galda and Beach 67). Galda and Beach argue that it is imperative for learners to focus on the nature and reasons of these influences on the characters (67). Also, a novel set in a different time period may elicit thoughts and questions about cultural practices belonging to that specific period (Galda and Beach 67). The selected reader response studies discussed explored learners' reactions to multicultural texts and how this affects their identification with the characters and thematic elements. This idea is central to my research and based on these findings, I want to explore how social factors in a reader's environment contribute to whether identification will occur. The next chapter will concern the data collection process. A summary and background of each poem will be provided and the chapter will then delve into a discussion of the findings arising from the research participants' answers to the questionnaire.

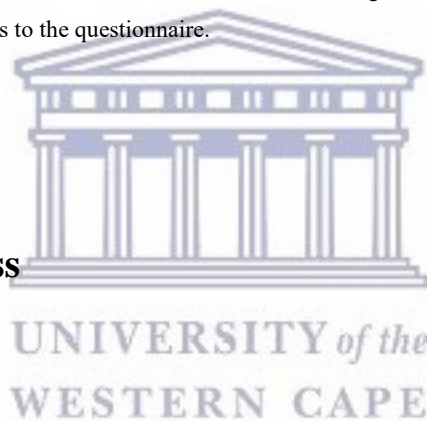
Chapter 2

The data collection process

Methodology

1 .Research methodology

The qualitative research methodology explores the nature or lived experience of a specific phenomenon and of considerable importance is the social environment from which this phenomenon emanates (Labuschagne 100). In theory and practice, the researcher seeks to comprehend the phenomenon from the very same people it affects, usually through three methods: interviews, direct observation and written documents (Labuschagne 100-101). A researcher seeking to embark on this type of enquiry can become involved in the environment to varying degrees (Babbie 860). For example, in external participation, the researcher does not actively participate in the group's daily setting but observes from a distance (Babbie 860). Towards the other end of the scale is active participation which is probably one of the hallmarks of a qualitative investigation



because the researcher becomes a part of the lived experience of the group being studied by partaking in all activities as far as possible (Babbie 860). In total participation, the researcher has the dual role of researcher and research participant (Babbie 860). For the present study, I will be detached as an external participant within the research experience as I will be an observer to the learners' transactional engagements with the poems.

2. Research design

The research design will be of a flexible nature as I will use the case study. According to Elizabeth Henning, Wilhelm van Rensburg and Brigitte Smit, this type of research design analyses a phenomenon that has known limitations and places importance on the relationship between context and action (41).

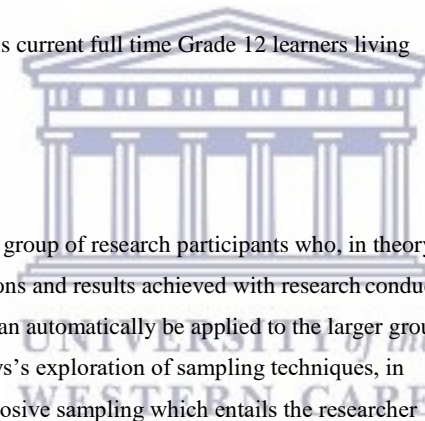
3. Population

As previously stated, the sample population is current full time Grade 12 learners living and schooling in Mitchells Plain.

4. Sampling

The notion behind sampling is to use a small group of research participants who, in theory, represent a larger group (Berg 30). Conclusions and results achieved with research conducted with the small group or sample population, can automatically be applied to the larger group (population) (Berg 30). Drawing on Ted Palys's exploration of sampling techniques, in "Purposive Sampling" (2008), I utilised purposive sampling which entails the researcher choosing participants based on how well they fit the structure of the research question (697). I am specifically exploring the reaction and identification of poetry as influenced by social factors, among Grade 12 learners who live and school in Mitchells Plain. I therefore need to select research participants with these characteristics out of the population which is why purposive sampling is the best choice. It is also known as judgemental sampling as the researcher uses their knowledge to carefully select research participants who will represent the population to be studied (Berg 32).

5. Data collection



5.1 Gaining access to the research sites

5.1.1 Contacting the schools

I communicated with the two schools by emailing them and phoning the school landline. I initially spoke to the secretaries who assisted me in liaising with the principals, deputy principals and English Heads of Department. I expressed my interest in conducting the research at their particular school by providing a summary of my proposed study, its importance as well as its projected benefits for the school and the learners. These benefits included the notion that the learners would be familiar with the prescribed poetry in the months before their final examination. An additional proposed advantage was that the learners would develop much-needed critical thinking and self-awareness skills as well as a new method of viewing and appreciating poetry.

5.2 Ethical concerns

5.2.1 Gaining permission from the Western Cape Education Department

Any formal research conducted at state schools in the Western Cape need permission from the Western Cape Education Department. I obtained this permission from their Directorate of Research. The process was as follows: I made enquiries and was asked to send through my research proposal. Once my research proposal was sufficiently read and accepted, they provided me with an official permission letter allowing the research to proceed. They usually sanction a specific time period in which the data collection must occur. After my first data collection day, I soon realised that the project was in need of more data which is why I requested a second permission letter with a new set of dates. Both of these letters are present in the Addendum. However, it must be noted that the Directorate of Research made an error with the dates on the second letter as these were not the dates we had agreed upon.

5.2.2 Consent forms

I indicated to the research participants and their teachers that they can only partake in the research if they submit signed consent forms. I handed out consent forms with an information sheet which explained all the necessary information. The sheet also made it clear that the study was voluntary and I provided my contact details if parents or guardians wanted to contact me for further information or queries. I highlighted the importance of the consent forms and explained to the learners that if they are under 18-years-old, the consent forms

must be signed by their parents or legal guardians. If they are 18-years-old and over, they are able to provide consent on their own behalf.

5.2.3 Anonymity versus Confidentiality

Many people mistakenly confuse the two abovementioned terms when they bear very different meanings (Berg 57). When confidentiality is granted to a research participant, the researcher ensures that there is generally no trace of the research participant (Berg 57). Their identity is completely protected because their name cannot be linked to the research at all. Berg contends that most of the time, qualitative researchers are acquainted with the research participants to some degree, in the sense that they are aware of who they are (58). It is therefore highly unlikely that anonymity can be promised to a research participant (Berg 58). The general practice within qualitative research is to grant confidentiality. Unfortunately, due to the nature of this research project, the learners were required to write their names on their questionnaires. I explained to them that the only reason is for the administration of the consent forms. It was imperative for me to know if the answered questionnaires could be paired with signed consent forms. Throughout the data collection process, I consistently promised the research participants that their names will not be published in the research and that I will be the only individual who is aware of their answers and it will be unethical if I divulged their specific answers to anybody. There seems to be a rather unexpected trend with young people and mourning individuals who wish for their names be explicitly used in the research (Wiles, Crow, Heath and Charles 424-425). In such particular instances, studies have shown that researchers do not consent to this request as they are of the opinion that a mainstay rule of proper research is to grant anonymity to research participants (Wiles et al. 425). With the present research project, there were no challenges of this manner as none of the research participants indicated that they want to be identified in the research. However, there were a few learners who did not write down their names on their answer sheets and as a result, I did not utilise their answers in the data analysis. I had no choice as I could not match their answers with a signed consent form. It must be noted however, that the fact that the learners were required to write down their names could be perceived as a limitation to the study. This point will be discussed later in the thesis.

5.3 Steps in the data collection process

5.3.1 Data collection tool

Research participants respond to open-ended questionnaires either in the form of a structured interview which is guided by the researcher or they may answer the questions themselves (Williams 246). Williams contends that certain factors should be taken into account when deciding how to provide the questionnaire such as how much time is available for the completion of the questionnaire and which questions to include (246). An advantage of having the questionnaire personally administered by the researcher is that any ambiguity or uncertainty can be cleared up instantly (Williams 246). Also, the researcher can ensure that every question has been answered (Williams 246). However, this format cannot work for large scale groups and some research participants may want to remain completely anonymous which will result in them leaving the research process (Williams 246). A typical questionnaire in qualitative research consists of four types of questions- namely, essential questions, extra questions, throwaway questions and probing questions (Berg 75). The goal of essential questions is to evoke specific kinds of answers which are relevant to the research question (Berg 75). There is a similarity between extra questions and essential questions except for variation in words (Berg 75). Extra questions are present to detect any change in the consistency of answers because a research participant may change their answer if confronted with the same content of a question which is veiled by different words (Berg 75). The initial section of the questionnaire usually contains a couple of throwaway questions in an effort to build a rapport and understanding between the researcher and the research participant (Berg 77). Typical throwaway questions refer to age or sex. Probing questions generally attempt to elicit lengthy, detailed and insightful responses through words of influence such as "Can you explain X?" or "What happened after Y?" (Berg 77). The questionnaires utilised in the present study consists of a mixture between essential and probing questions as it was important to elicit responses which were detailed and relevant to the research question. Further relevant questionnaire guidelines are proffered by Babbie and these tips include the fact that the researcher must be mindful of the extent of the willingness of research participants to open up and share information in the research process (275). This challenge refers to respondents who are afraid of expressing a certain viewpoint because they know they are in the minority. An example may be an individual who does not want to reveal that they are homophobic.

Fortunately, for the present research project, I fully encouraged the learners to embrace the questionnaires and reveal their innermost thoughts without any judgement. I also reiterated that if they feel uncomfortable, they can choose to not answer certain questions. I believe this approach was wholly successful as a few of the response sheets elicited quite

controversial statements and emotions which illustrates the notion that they were simply at ease and comfortable. Another factor to consider regarding questionnaires is that questions need to be relevant in order to allow proper useful data to be collected (Babbie 275). This notion refers to the researcher asking particularly random questions which may result in research participants feeling unsure or baffled (Babbie 275). The questionnaires utilised in my study only comprised of relevant questions relating to the seven prescribed poems and the learners were aware that the goal of the research process was only to gather information driven by their responses to these poems. An additional important point to raise is that Babbie argues for the notion of completely neutral, unbiased questions (276). Responses can lack validity if questions encourage research participants to provide an answer which is swayed towards a particular stance or worldview (Babbie 276). There was no bias in this research project's questionnaires but for clarity sake, a question of this nature would be, "Do you agree that 'Funeral Blues' is about an individual who is in mourning?" or " 'Felix Randal' is a boring poem. Motivate why you agree.". An important notion to be aware of is that at the end of the thesis, the learners' responses are attached. Their responses were transcribed to protect their identities and they appear verbatim with spelling and grammatical errors included.

5.3.2 The formal data collection process

I first introduced myself to the learners with a brief speech about my background and how I became interested in reader response theory. I then explained how, as a high school learner, I was frustrated with the manner in which poetry was being taught and assessed. As I said this statement, some learners nodded in agreement. The speech then contrasted the differences between the tenets of reader response theory with what is currently being taught in state schools. I took a few minutes to express that the study is of a voluntary nature and participants' names will not be published which means there is complete confidentiality. If they chose to not participate, it would not affect them negatively in any possible way. I then disseminated a poem with a detailed questionnaire and the learners wrote their answers on blank folio. Owing to time constraints, I allocated approximately fifteen to twenty minutes for each poem in the engagement. As stated earlier, it must be noted that after the first data collection session, the need to amend the questionnaire arose as it was not detailed enough to elicit intensely qualitative answers. For this reason, there are two versions of the questionnaire in the addendum. Another point to mention is that the E. E. Cummings poem "somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond" was initially part of the research project

but the responses in the first session were too thin which is why I decided against using it in the data analysis.

6. Data analysis

Within typical qualitative research, the data gathered comprises of authentic and intense information regarding a lived experience of a person or group of people (Labuschagne 101). The data analysis process involves reading the data in terms of specific themes or categories and this is known as content analysis (Labuschagne 101). Content analysis is usually utilised to analyse written documents or transcribed interviews (Berg 240). It is appropriate for the study as open coding allows the researcher to monitor various recurring or non-recurring patterns and thematic elements in the participants' answers (Hsieh and Shannon 1277). As I am researching the phenomenon of learners' reactions of acceptance or rejection towards the prescribed poetry and how their readings are influenced by social factors within their environment, this method of data analysis allows me to monitor their answers for consistent patterns or motifs. I read through the learners' answers and assigned codes to certain themes such as "death", "religion", "family" and so forth. In summary, Berg contends that content analysis can be considered a "passport to listening to the words of the text" and gaining a deeper understanding of the emotions, viewpoints, challenges and daily struggles of the individual to which the words belong (242). The discussion will now focus on the data obtained in the data collection process. A brief background of the poet and his or her time period as well as a close analysis of the poem will be provided. The close analysis does not carry citations as I provide my own knowledge of the mainstream readings. Following this, the thesis will deliberate on the research participants' responses in an analytical yet exploratory manner.

The Garden of Love

British Romantic poet William Blake's "The Garden of Love" was the first poem explored with the learners as part of the data collection process. His notable poem "London" (1794) formed part of the National Senior Certificate English Home Language curriculum for several years before the introduction of a new set of poems in 2017. The colourful, engaging lesson in which I taught "London" to Grade 12 learners during my Teaching Practice largely inspired this research project. The poem has popularly been analysed as a negative evaluation of the government and Church of England (Larrissy 46). Additional themes which permeate most of his work are the individual versus society, nature, child labour, religion and

the Industrial Revolution (Zhan 2612). As a pioneer of the Romantic period in English poetry, Blake was influential with his stances on the individual, goodness as opposed to evil, enlightenment and imagination (Zhan 1612). These concepts have led commentators to describe Blake in terms such as mystic, idealist, humanist and anarchist (Marshall 39). He routinely vehemently displayed activism to societal laws and beliefs (Marshall 44).

Interestingly, he disagreed with the accepted Great Chain of Being by asserting that plants and natural things such as rocks are able to experience emotion (Marshall 44). According to Blake, one's ability to imagine is more important than one's ability to rationalise (Marshall 46). It would be a mischaracterisation to label Blake as a poet who is completely opposed to reason (Marshall 46). A more sound argument would be that Blake dislikes the type of reason or rationalisation which limits the creative elements of the self (Marshall 46). For Blake, contemporary society needs to undergo a transition by eradicating religion, war and cold marriages (Marshall 54). This position on religion is highlighted in "The Garden of Love". The mainstream reading of "The Garden of Love" presents a speaker returning to a place he remembers from his childhood days, only to discover that a church or chapel has been built on the same premises. In addition, he is not allowed to enter the church and he then explores the garden which now bears tombstones and dead flowers (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 161). Also, priests in dark garbs are roaming around the area (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 161). On a basic level of interpretation, the poem suggests ideas relating to the reality of the passage of time and how things inevitably change (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 161). On a closer reading, the poem possibly speaks of how religion controls and limits people's earthly desires (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 161). Larrissy argues this point by suggesting that "The Garden of Love" embodies the consequences of oppression by people who hold societal power (41).

The thesis will now provide a close reading of the poem. Structurally, the reader is presented with three quatrains consisting of four lines each. The rhyme scheme is regular and the poem contains end rhyme and instances of internal rhyme. Most lines start with the word "and" which adds a conversational feel to the poem and also increases the pace. The first quatrain concerns the speaker's action of going back to the garden he knew from childhood and discovering a church or chapel built in its place. The terms "Garden of Love" and "Chapel" are capitalised to indicate their importance to the speaker. Ironically, the importance of the church is rather thrust upon the speaker as during Blake's time, it was virtually impossible to reject the laws and authority of the Church of England. The word "green" refers to the fact that as a young boy, he would play in the green pastures of the

garden. The use of the word “green” for referring to the garden suggests that in his recollection, the garden was bursting with colour and vitality.

In the second quatrain, the speaker approaches the chapel, but is coldly turned away. He then departs to the garden in the hope of rekindling his pleasurable childhood memories. The lines 5-6, “And the gates of this Chapel were shut, And Thou shalt not. writ over the door” are significant because usually a church is always open to anyone, whether they are congregants or not. A church is considered a place of hope, loving comfort and sanctuary but this church is different. The use of the word “shut” emphasises that it is almost permanently closed and does not invite anyone to go inside. The door of the church also bears a negative commandment of the 10 Commandments indicating and prompting ideas about actions which lead to sin. This quatrain can be understood in terms of Blake’s negative views of the Church of England. The chapel in this poem highlights the idea that the Church of England during Blake’s time was an aggressive and controlling institution- devoid of love and understanding. The speaker feels rejected by the Church and perhaps that is how Blake and so many others felt. In the final quatrain, the speaker is horrified when he seeks out the garden but it is in total contrast to the garden he remembers from his childhood. It is populated with tombstones and priests in dark clothing. Line 10’s “And tombstones where flowers should be” underscores the contrast between polar opposites such as life and death, happiness and sadness as well as repression versus freedom which are touched on in many of Blake’s poems. Flowers which are a symbol of freedom have been replaced by a sombre symbol of death which leads one to believe that the speaker is suggesting that the Church of England’s authoritative laws and influence leave one feeling depressed and hopeless. The poem ends with the speaker stating, in line 11, “And Priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds, And binding with briars, my joys & desires.” Firstly, the priests are wearing dark clothing which conjures up the image of “evil”. What is interesting is that they are doing something as natural as walking around the area and performing their daily duties but as they are doing this instinctive action, they are repressing people’s earthly desires. The speaker is saying that this horrific act of controlling people and limiting sexual pleasure comes naturally to priests and it is part of their agenda or what they are trained to do.

During the data collection process, the learners were firstly asked what they believe to be the poem’s general ideas and themes. Love and death were popular across the board. Research participants indicated that they sensed the poem is about death because of the mention of tombstones, a chapel and priests. The ones who noted love in the poem explained that they believe the poem deals with the loss of love or an individual who is actively trying to fall in love. Someone stated that the speaker’s “love has changed” and he is now extremely

sad and depressed which has caused him to shut himself off to others. She argued that the chapel doors being shut is a metaphor for this notion. There was a fair amount of adherence to the basic mainstream interpretation of the poem, namely that the speaker spent his childhood days in a garden and he has now returned years later only to discover that it has changed. One research participant added that the transition of the garden reinforces the idea that “things change over time”.

Mental illness, namely depression, was highlighted by a few research participants but they did not indicate why they believe so. In terms of the social sphere of relationships with friends and family, most responses referenced how the poem leads them to think of the deaths of their own family members and in this way, “The Garden of Love” could have possibly stirred dramatic emotion. A female learner linked the death of her own family members to the speaker’s encounter with the cemetery. She believes he is at a cemetery because his family members have just died, and the chapel now cultivates sadness and influences people to have hearts filled with darkness. Another research participant also mentions the death of peers in the community, in particular, a child. The murder of children is a problem in the Western Cape, with statistics reporting that 66 children were murdered in the province in 2017 (Collins n. pag). Some of these acts of violence have occurred in Mitchells Plain, with a few alarming headlines such as the murder of 6-year-old Stacey Adams in Eastridge. It is therefore unsurprising that Mitchells Plain high school learners can relate to the poem in this way, after having experienced this kind of trauma, even indirectly, merely by being a resident of Mitchells Plain. A shocking, sombre comment has been made by one research participant who shares that in terms of her own family, funerals are the norm. This vivid identification with the poem’s theme of death links well with David Bleich’s reader response theory of subjective criticism, as the learners’ ability to relate because of their personal circumstances of death falls under Bleich’s delineation of ‘association’.

A certain response raised an issue which is somewhat unique to the Cape Flats- a learner has stated that he can identify with the poem because his family members have either died or disappeared. In June 2018, The Mitchells Plain Community Policing cluster established a missing person’s response unit to tackle the challenge of disappearing children and adults (Palm n. pag). The poem also allows participants to reminisce about their positive experiences with family members. One participant reflects on the impact and connection she had with her grandmother. She writes: “The poem makes me think of my grandmother because she was always a person to look for things that make me smile.” Similarly, the poem reminds a learner about lost connections and regret as her young sister passed away when she was only in Grade 6 and she wishes she could have built their relationship before then. A

male research participant believes that his frequent visits to cemeteries has led him to asking existential questions about life after death. Psychologically, a learner argues that she identifies with the poem because just as the garden has changed from a place of happiness to a place of sadness, she has changed as a person. This is owing to her belief that she used to be a positive, optimistic person but now she feels like an empty void. She describes herself as “dead”. This form of deep contemplation and consideration is indicative of Rosenblatt’s aesthetic reading. Furthermore, a few learners identify with the poem because they have considered their communities where they live. The general feeling when referencing communities is that these areas are unsafe because of criminal elements and unfriendly people. This notion is echoed by someone who comments that his community has “a lot of darkness”. One research participant laments that he can relate to the garden because when he was six years old, he would have a joyous time in the park but it was soon destroyed by the presence of gangsters and copious amounts of litter. Someone else also shares about negative associations in his community as he encounters people who do not like him. The poem therefore inspires learners to identify with the poem through the lens of community and death which are wholly negative associations and this causes great concern.

Funeral Blues

The next work which will be discussed is “Funeral Blues” which was written by W.H. Auden, a socially-driven English-American poet (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 123). Early work by Auden established him as a poet who focused on political ideas and like Blake, openly criticised political managements and literary circles (Buell 10). Interestingly, he stands apart from the other poets in this study as he argued for a reader response-type experience with poems. In his essay, “The Virgin and the Dynamo”, he expresses that a poem is a “pseudo-person” which means that it functions as a mirror in that it addresses the reader in a personal manner as human being to human being (cited in Smith 3). Smith further argues that by using this analogy, Auden is discussing the double nature of a literary text. It is firstly a historically-produced entity yet also acts as discourse which attaches specific meaning to specific readers when they personally engage with the text (Smith 4). Auden reinforced this idea by also openly stating that the meaning of a literary text is the communication between the words of the poem and the unique reader (Smith 20). In his plays, the idea of the ‘self’ is a myriad of forces which are constantly influenced by one’s family, the government and the media (Smith 12). Auden also tends to describe how the imaginative faculty of oneself has a mutually-influential relationship with social consciousness (Buell 118). The genre of

“Funeral Blues” is an elegy, or a lament for a deceased person (Krone 157). It has arguably become one of the most popular elegies of the last century (Mills 42). The tone is melancholic as the speaker mourns and demands that others experience his heartache. He achieves this by relating his subjective emotions towards objects in his immediate environment (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 124). His feelings then progress to the public environment and finally conclude with a focus on his own sense of personal loss (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 124).

The poem has a tight structure of four quatrains with a regular rhyme scheme. The internal sounds conveyed in the poem can be likened to a musical “Blues” piece (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 125). Auden uses figurative language such as hyperbole, in the speaker’s expression of his grief, and personification and onomatopoeia, to emphasise how inanimate objects are also feeling heartache (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 124). It has been suggested that the poem was originally considered satire due to the hyperbolic demands of the speaker (Krone 157). It becomes more apparent however as the poem progresses, that the speaker’s loss is genuine- especially in the final two quatrains (Krone 157). According to the critic Rebecca Mills, a clock represents the passing of time to an individual and this passage is a reminder of the brevity of life. The speaker’s wish to stop the clocks indicates a desire to freeze events (37). A telephone acts as a linkage to a deceased loved one and by cutting telephones, there is no depressing communication with the deceased (Mills 37). This kind of willingness to change the natural acts of technology reveals the speaker’s attempts to make sense of their loss (Mills 42).

A closer reading will now be offered. The poem opens with a directive or command and this technique dominates the majority of lines throughout the poem. The first quatrain focuses on how he wants people to observe mourning for an individual in their private capacity. “Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone” (line 1) are small actions people can perform in order to privately mourn the individual. It is important to note that the deceased person is never mentioned by name in the poem and initially, the reader is also unsure of the speaker’s relationship to the deceased. This first quatrain harbours a strong negative mood as the directives are all of a negative nature, such as “stop” (line 1), “prevent” (line 2), and “silence” (line 3). A positive command ends off the quatrain as the speaker says people should “bring” the deceased’s coffin (line 4). It seems as though the speaker wishes to have elongated silence in this quatrain as he wants to prevent all sounds. Functioning clocks make a ticking sound, a telephone rings, dogs bark, and pianos emit classical music. Having silence to observe respect for a deceased person is a custom in most western countries.

In the second quatrain, it is clear that the speaker desires the acts of mourning to be made public as he refers to outward, exaggerated signs of mourning. An aeroplane must announce the deceased's passing in the sky. He wants doves and traffic officers to don bows and black gloves respectively. The speaker uses onomatopoeia in "circle moaning overhead" (line 5). This technique is effective as we can hear the low, depressing sound of the aeroplane but using "moaning" to describe the aeroplane can also be considered personification and suggests that even inanimate objects are in emotional turmoil because of this individual's death. In the third quatrain, the speaker proclaims that the deceased was his compass in life. He was perhaps a guide or voice of reason during troubling times and decisions. "My working week and my Sunday rest" (line 10) suggests that the deceased meant everything to the speaker- their relationship or friendship was active every moment of every single day. The line "I thought that love would last forever" (line 12) is the first and only direct indication we have of the relationship between the two characters. In the final quatrain, the speaker professes that he does not care about stereotypical romantic aspects of dating and love such as watching the stars together under the moon or going for walks on the beach. He is traumatised and just like the previous quatrains, he wants others to share in his mourning. The line "Pack up the moon, dismantle the sun" (line 14) are actions which affect everyone. He wants the mourning period to be universal. The final line of the poem "For nothing now can ever come to any good" (line 16) has a tone of despair as it is clear that this mourning period will last for an extended period of time with no hope of ending anytime soon.

When presented with a reader response engagement with "Funeral Blues", most research participants echo the mainstream ideas of the poem. Almost all of the learners state that the poem is about someone who has lost their loved one, the most popular answer being a woman whose husband has suddenly passed away. One research participant believes that the speaker is a high-ranking military leader who mourns the loss of his adored soldier. Another notion that arose from the responses was the emotional and psychological state of the speaker. It was argued that "she" generally feels a sense of anger, helplessness and despair. She is also in disbelief as she believed the relationship would stand the test of time. One research participant believes she is psychotic but did not elaborate. Some research participants deride the selfish nature of the speaker as she demands that others experience her anguish. Their engagement but dissatisfaction with the speaker's actions may be indicative of Iser's phenomenological reader response theory as they cannot relate to the speaker but are willing to attempt to understand this person's worldviews. Most learners do not sense a connection to religion in the poem but one respondent notably argues that the poem leads her to think of religion because in her religion (Islam), one should put God at the centre of one's

life and not a loved one. It is evident that she lacks sympathy for the speaker which is a unique reaction compared to all of the other responses. It is clear that Holland's transactive criticism is relevant here as the research participant's identity theme of religion strongly clashes with her perceived interpretation of the poem.

When asked if the poem reminds them about their school environment, only a few research participants have indicated yes. It reminds a learner of her classmates and how they handle the breakdown of romantic relationships, "They let opportunities pass by because they are too weak to propel themselves forward." In accordance with Fish's experiential reader response and the idea of "interpretive communities" of adolescents, she further states that she can relate to the poem because it is typical for teenagers to yearn for the world to cease when their relationships end. Another learner who can relate to the poem adds that she identifies with the speaker's lack of interest or inability to do daily things because she is not always eager to attend school; "Sometimes I don't want to go to school for various reasons, but at the same time, I go to school because I have to so I try to make the most of it and I find something to look forward to." A research participant echoes the same idea by referring to the "Monday blues" and how "no one wants to go to school." These latter responses also bear reference to interpretive communities. The poem has therefore revealed that some readers revert to their interpretive community, namely that of the adolescent, in order to make sense of the poem. In other words, the typical adolescent is heavily and emotionally involved in romantic relationships and also dislikes attending school.

Interestingly, the poem stirs up a few deep-seated emotions and memories of learners' family members as they engaged in intense aesthetic readings. One learner relays a story of the childhood loss of the "head of my family". Her response has a tone of regret, as she writes that initially she was not perturbed by his death because she had no connection with him. Recently, the death struck her hard because all her siblings have shared their good memories of their time with him. She notes that they encourage her by saying he would be very proud if she passes Grade 12. Such strong, emotional reactions accompanied by contemplation are in line with Bleich's subjective criticism. The poem further encourages learners to consider how their reactions to possibly losing their loved ones would mirror the actions of the speaker, and in this way they can relate. In contrast, someone said that if she lost her loved one, she would struggle to cope but would not want everyone else to experience her emotions. On an existential note, a research participant contemplates how "death is inevitable...people die and it's the way of the universe." This response is interesting as the Eastridge community witnesses a large amount of murders each month. Perhaps this learner has merely accepted the reality of life in Eastridge.

Aside from familial relationships, the poem triggers some thoughts about friendships and romantic relationships. One research participant reveals that the poem reminds her of the death of friendship, clarifying that it is not about the physical death of the friend but rather the termination of the contract of friendship that they shared. Another learner states that she has lost a loved one before. She goes on to write that these experiences assist an individual in being “strong” and dealing with different kinds of people. Something that stands out is the idea that when your friend or loved one passes away, you need to remember them. Interestingly, according to her, at the deceased’s funeral, it is compulsory for everyone to show the utmost respect for the deceased because she knows “this person is a great person” despite disagreement by others. She could be relating to her own life where a family member or friend she cared for, was condemned by community members after their passing. Strong, authentic friendships are valued by one research participant who argues that the ideal friends are truly supportive and stand by one’s side despite any circumstances. Similarly, a learner states that the poem encourages her to think of her own perplexing problems in approaching romantic relationships. She cautiously tries to not become close to a person out of fear because she is “someone who loves too much; someone who loves violently”. She also reflects on missed relationship opportunities because of anxiety relating to the people she had chosen to love. As this research participant attends a strict Islamic school, one could infer that perhaps she fell in love with someone from another religion or even the same gender. In this particular case, the response has exhibited tenets of Bleich’s subjective criticism and Holland’s transactive criticism as there is a bevy of deep-seated emotions, unconscious desires and fears which are impeding progress in some parts of her life.

For a few, the community sphere’s social ill of gangsterism springs to mind when experiencing “Funeral Blues”. One research participant argues that it “leads to a lot of innocent people dying especially when they have feuds”. Another learner states that the poem reminds her of gangsterism because gang members are killed by gang leaders or rival gangs and innocent people also fall victim. Notable feuds which may have affected these research participants include feuds involving the 28s gang in March 2016 and Eastridge was identified as a hotspot for shootings (Dolley n. pag). Also, in July 2018, a man was fatally shot at an Eastridge clinic in what the authorities believed was due to a gang feud (Phaliso n. pag). Another response relating to the community sphere is that a female learner has indicated that she identifies with the poem because people, especially little children, are murdered daily. This association of Mitchells Plain with crime is also further evident because another learner states that it is obvious that the deceased in the poem was murdered. She insinuated that people only die due to being murdered. This suggestion possibly sheds light on how

normalised she has become to murders in Mitchells Plain. The poem leads an additional research participant to share that in her community, there is a sense of ubuntu as everyone contributes to funeral costs in order to ease the financial burden on the family. This kind of answer reveals more of the positive aspects of social conditions in the area which are usually overlooked. These responses shed light on the impact of living conditions in Mitchells Plain and how they colour the lens in which these learners viewed this poem. It is through the lens of the community whereby most learners can relate to the poem and once again, this phenomenon is an indication of Barthes' "plaisir" as they experience contentment when their personal experiences are relatable to ideas presented by the literary text.

Remember

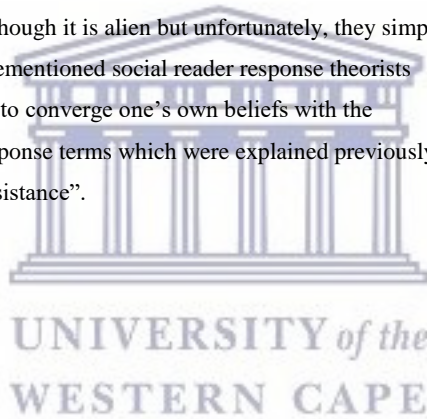
The only poem by a female poet in the current National Senior Certificate English Home Language curriculum is Christina Rossetti's "Remember". The Victorian poet was a practising and devout Church of England member and possibly partly due to these beliefs, she formed a strong friendship with Jesuit priest and poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins (Packer 5 and 185). He greatly respected her work and even structured some of his own poems according to her distinctive composition style (Packer 185). It must be noted that Hopkins's poem "Felix Randal" also forms part of the curriculum and the findings from that reader response engagement will be discussed later. In terms of prevalent themes in Rossetti's work, the content of her late 1840s poetry reveal a preoccupation with death and a strong desire for death (Packer 18). She soon began to compose regretful-toned poems which focused on the brevity of life and missed opportunities in youth (Packer 51). These poems include "The Last Complaint", "After Death Rest" and "Remember" (Packer 51). Packer further suggests that these poems possibly arose from Rossetti's inner turmoil of being in a miserable engagement yet feeling immense attraction for another man (Packer 51). She argues this point by stating that the content of Rossetti's poems should not be misjudged as mere poetic imagination but rather due to a "concrete life situation" (52).

The mainstream reading of "Remember" concerns an individual who is sick due to a disease or "corruption" (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 6). She reflects on memories shared with her beloved and she expresses a desire to be remembered after her death (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 6). However, according to the speaker, the act of remembering will cause her beloved to depressingly mourn which is why she no longer wishes to be remembered. If her beloved does happen to remember her, he should smile and be content with the memories they shared (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 32).

A rather feminist reading is offered by Margaret Reynolds who argues that it is generally assumed that “Remember” is a romantic poem because we naturally are inclined to believe that the speaker is a female, which is a weak move (32). Instead, Reynolds asserts that the poem concerns the theme of death; yet again, readers assume the speaker is on the brink of death because of societal gender stereotypes- one where women are generally passive and die whilst men are stronger and survive to mourn (32). She suggests a further different reading of the lines 11 to 12, “For if the darkness and corruption leave, A vestige of the thoughts I once had” in that she argues that the speaker is contemplating about their abusive and controlling relationship (Reynolds 33).

Structurally, the poem is a petrarchan sonnet divided into an octave and sestet with a volta at the start of the sestet. The rhyme scheme is irregular. A closer inspection of the poem will be discussed in terms of the octave and the sestet. The octave’s repetition of “remember” highlights the fact that being remembered is important to the speaker. She employs a euphemism for death (“gone away”- line 1) and the afterlife (“silent land” - line 2). “Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay” (line 4) conjures up an image of the speaker rising up to leave but then quickly returning. This indicates that the speaker desires to leave the relationship or even this world, yet she harbours uncertainty. Lines 5 to 6 with “Remember me when no more day by day, You tell me of our future that you plann’d:” suggest that the speaker and her beloved are in a serious relationship and have made concrete plans for their future together. The dreadful illness is therefore unexpected and sudden, throwing their plans into awkward disarray. The statement in line 8, “It will be late to counsel then or pray”, refers to the notion that she has a terminal illness and has accepted the fact that she will pass away and this is a certainty which cannot be avoided. Conventional methods of offering prayer for a sickly person or providing comfort will not result in the eradication of the illness as it is too late and the illness has become serious. It is important to note that there are not obvious hints as to the name of the exact sickness. The sestet’s volta is evident by the significant word “yet” (line 9) as there is a sudden shift in the tone of the poem. The speaker now retreats on her wishes to be remembered- something she consistently emphasised in the octave. A possible reason for this admission can be seen in the final few lines. She appeals to her beloved saying, “Better by far you should forget and smile than that you should remember and be sad”, (lines 13-14) which refers to the notion that she would prefer her beloved to forget about her and be a happy, pleasant individual than dwell on her memory in angst and depression. This final line is the speaker’s selfless release of him as she is aware of the toll depression takes on a grieving individual.

When exploring “Remember” with the learners, almost all of the responses were in line with the mainstream reading of the poem, namely that an individual wants to be remembered after she has passed away but soon realises this memory will cause her beloved to depressingly mourn which is why she no longer wishes to be remembered. If the beloved happens to remember her, he should smile and be content with the unique moments they shared. Interestingly, the question of whether they can relate to the poem offered split responses as some indicated that they can whilst others declined any identification. A female respondent shares that she agrees with the speaker’s sentiments because she wants to make a lasting impact on people and her community at large. A few learners have outwardly expressed that they cannot relate to the poem. One of these female learners further elucidated by declaring: “It doesn’t make me think of anything.” Possible reasons for this occurrence will be discussed in the next chapter. It is worthwhile to note that the strong lack of identification with the poem can firstly be explained by Iser’s phenomenological reader response theory as the literary textual world is visible to these research participants and they are committed to it in that they are trying to engage with it even though it is alien but unfortunately, they simply cannot feel a relatable connection. Other aforementioned social reader response theorists allude to this issue by stating that an inability to converge one’s own beliefs with the demands of the text is indicative of reader response terms which were explained previously, namely, Barthes’ “jouissance” and Sipe’s “resistance”.



Chapter 3

A Hard Frost

Cecil Day-Lewis, an Anglo-Irishman, was an active member of a group of British and Irish poets during the 1930s who were referred to sometimes as the Auden Group (Gelpi 3). Members included prominent names in poetry such as W.H. Auden, Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice (Gelpi 3). The group was associated with strong left-wing views and an ambitious desire to be the future of British and Irish literature (Gelpi 3). During the time, the literary world was shining more recognition on American poets such as Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot’s poetry (Gelpi 4). Bizarrely, prominent South African poet Roy Campbell held a grudge towards Day-Lewis and the group for reasons described as “literary jealousy” (Gelpi 4). It is interesting to note the intersection between Grade 12 English Home Language prescribed poetry. Roy Campbell’s “Autumn” was a solid mainstay in the syllabus for

several years before the introduction of the new syllabus which has included Auden's "Funeral Blues" and Day-Lewis's "A Hard Frost." As mentioned earlier, Campbell's "The Zulu Girl" is also part of the new selection of poems but does not form part of the present study. A rather puzzling fact of literature trivia is proffered by Gelpi as he postulates that the prevailing paradigm of Modernism which permeated the Arts in the first half of the 19th Century did not affect British poetry (4). Similar to the nature poets of the Romantic period in poetry, Day-Lewis held a firm, genuine passion for the natural world which made him feel most serene (Southworth and Southworth 477).

From a general perspective, "A Hard Frost" can be summarised succinctly in its title. In plain terms, the poem concerns the external sight of how frost appears on a window pane and the resulting implications of this appearance. The speaker believes that the formation of the frost has a direct bearing on the temperature and climate because one would be mistaken to think spring has arrived when it is actually in the middle of winter (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 141). This artificial spring is dominant but the actual spring is slowly making an appearance (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 141). In terms of structure, there are two quatrains. The first quatrain provides the "lie" and the second quatrain comments on this lie by exposing the truth (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 141). The whole poem consists of an extended metaphor- a comparison of the appearance of frost on a window to the season of spring. The initial section of the poem- "A frost came in the night and stole my world / And left this changeling for it - a precocious Image of spring, too brilliant to be true." (lines 1-3) illustrates the notion that the frost which has unexpectedly formed overnight on the window panes and hedges and spring are a considerable metaphor. These elements are compared to a thief who burgles houses in the middle of the night and abruptly leaves. In the same manner that a thief impacts his victims' lives by stealing their precious items, the frost has figuratively stolen the natural landscape and appearance of winter. A changeling can be defined as something of folklore, namely the occurrence of when a baby is stolen by fairies and has been replaced by a similar clone. The speaker is continuing the concern of a new landscape being substituted for another by arguing that it is as if the frost has replaced the surroundings with an appearance of an artificial spring. We know this because the speaker says, "A precocious image of spring" (lines 2-3), which is personification, as a picture of spring is compared to a well-developed toddler. The speaker is stating that spring has unexpectedly arrived too soon which leaves him feeling suspicious and baffled.

The poem then progresses with descriptions of the spring-like characteristics of the area. The frost is a crystal white as it is forming on the window pane, evident in the line, "White

lilac on the window-pane” (line 4). The leaves of grass resemble a flower (“Furred like a catkin”- line 5) and there are may drifts, which are also flowers, populating the hedges. In addition to these features, the speaker refers to the state of the trees (“elms” -line 6) that are filled with snow. The term “blossomers in crystal” (line 7) is a nod to the appearance of the snow on the trees as they appear crystal-like. The speaker continues the image of the white, opaque snow by stating that the grass areas contain “diamonds” (line 10). These are not literally diamonds but merely snow and frost. Personification is employed in line 10 with, “The sun looks out”. It is as if the sun is also somewhat surprised at these features of spring in the middle of winter. Lines 13 to 14 reveal, “Mockery spring, to lend this bridal gear, for a few hours to a raw country maid, then leave her all disconsolate with old fairings of aconite and snowdrop!” The term “Mockery spring” reinforces the notion that this is not a natural, authentic spring but an artificial one. Metaphor is employed to emphasise this point as an image is conjured up of a bride lending her white bridal gown to a low class maid. The maid will feel like a complete princess for a few hours and be content at the sight of herself in this gown but it has to be returned to its rightful owner as it is only on loan. As a result, she will be depressed once she reverts to her regular, peasant-like clothing. In relation to the poem, winter is only borrowing spring-like elements for a short while and unfortunately, it will soon have to return to its usual, cold, dark, and gloomy state.

The final lines offer a sense of hope and revival. The speaker utilises personification for the earth in lines “frost worrying the stiff clods unchles their grip” (lines 17-19) to illustrate that the real spring is occurring underground and will soon rise to the surface. The phrase, “lets the future breathe” (line 19) is a further personification of the earth as if the earth is allowing this process to happen as a delight or reward for the world and mankind. Spring represents growth and vitality and it could very well be what farmers, animals, tradesmen and other people need and yearn for during a long winter.

“A Hard Frost” by Cecil Day-Lewis generated thin responses in the data collection process. Most learners only indicate that the poem concerns the seasons of winter and spring. One learner highlights the theme of change and how this is evident in the change of seasons, change in wealth status and the disintegration of relationships. She further asserts that one’s life can change drastically in a quick and simple manner, all due to one act. The poem leads her to contemplate about change resulting from tough moments of decision-making at school. She did not elaborate on that particular point.

The theme of appearance versus reality is noticed by a research participant as the reality is not as it seems and appears to be dream-like. She furthers this idea, albeit unclearly, by referencing school as an institution of learning where relationships are formed with peers

and educators and they are regarded as family. Two rather unique responses are that the poem concerns a man proposing to his girlfriend and a slave who is gifted with a valuable item. They do not elaborate on how they reached these conclusions. Interestingly a rather personal, emotional aesthetic reading response notes that just as the frost disappears, so do friends. In line with the general mainstream reading of the poem, a learner states that the poem speaks about an artificial winter as it has arrived too early but confesses that she cannot relate to the poem or understand its relevance as it “doesn’t strike a nerve or cause tingling feelings to crawl up and down my spine”. Unfortunately, most responses share this sentiment as learners generally struggle to identify with any of the thematic elements in the poem which can also be explained by Barthes’ “jouissance” and Sipe’s “resistance”. I will explore possible reasons for this challenge in the next chapter.

Felix Randal

The discussion will now turn to Gerard Manley Hopkins whose work is wholly religious-based, directly influenced by his conversion to Roman Catholicism (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 112). He is particularly interested in exploring the personal “I” or “me” and not a stereotyped preconceived manner of how to view oneself, for example, by profession or relational terms like a father (Ong 4). As a religious individual, he believed the self was the means of connection with a relationship with God (Ong 5). “Felix Randal” was written in 1880 and published in 1918. It has been suggested by critics that the poem is largely autobiographical (Whiteford 438). The structure is a petrarchan which means it is divided into an octave and a sestet. In this structure, the octave usually presents a conflict or question and the sestet offers a solution or answer. A close inspection of the poem will now be offered. Hopkins is known for his ability to employ innovative strategies for sound and rhyme in his poems (McIntyre, Olivier and Varga 113). In keeping with this idea, Joseph Eble commends the technical poetic expertise of Hopkins by largely referencing the deliberate rhyming sounds present in the poem which he terms “interrelationships of sound” (130). Examples pertinent to this is the alliteration (“seeing the sick”, “reason rambled”), and the end-rhymes of each line (“ended, contended and mended”).

The first quatrain of the poem initially reveals the fact of Felix Randal’s death and a discussion of the sickness he had succumbed to. The second quatrain moves on to discuss the deep contrast between Randal in his prime and on his deathbed. There is also the inclusion of the statement that the priest administered the Last Rites, thereby sending Randal to Heaven. Eble argues that the poem bears colloquial language of a typical working class English

individual but then transitions to more refined speech, such as the following in lines 8 to 9, "Ah well, God rest him all road ever he offended!" (131). A more intense reading will now be suggested. The opening line, "Felix Randal the farrier, O is he dead then?" (line 1) initialises the speaker's shock at the passing of Felix Randal. The speaker's "duty" as showcased in line 1 with "my duty all ended" refers to one of his functions as a Catholic Priest and friend which is to provide care and comfort to the ill. He then further describes the physical and mental downward spiral of Randal as he was once a strong, imposing, healthy man who had been reduced to a sickly, worrisome individual. The speaker exemplifies this idea in lines 2 to 4 with, "his mould of man, big-boned and hardy-handsome pining, pining, till time when reason rambled in it". The explanation for his decline is the "fatal four disorders" (line 4). Many commentators have agreed that this term is a reference to humourism- which was an Ancient Greek medicinal philosophy carried over throughout the centuries. People's health was dependant on the presence of certain substances in the body.

The octave continues with the speaker emphasising Randal's declining health and his state of denial about this as evident in line 5 with, "Sickness broke him. Impatient, he cursed at first." The following lines of 6 to 9 offer spiritual comfort: "but mended being anointed and all; though a heavenlier heart began some months earlier, since I had our sweet reprieve and ransom tendered to him. Ah well, God rest him all road ever he offended!" The speaker reached out to Randal in his priestly capacity and gave him his Last Rites which means he died as a person of God, and was believed to be granted eternal life in Heaven. As per usual tradition, the sestet's volta introduces a change of tone. "This seeing the sick endears them to us, us too it endears. My tongue had taught thee comfort, touch had quenched thy tears, Thy tears that touched my heart, child, Felix, poor Felix Randal" (lines 11-13). By partaking in caring and counselling Randal, the speaker grew as a person and in turn, was comforted and built a connection with him. The line "My tongue had taught thee comfort, touch had quenched thy tears, thy tears that touched my heart, child" (lines 13-14) indicates that the relationship is reciprocal. The volta has therefore introduced a positive and uplifting tone which is in contrast to the tone of despair and disbelief in the octave. The final three lines provide a mood of nostalgia as the speaker is reminiscing on the days when Randal would execute his work as a blacksmith and he seemed incredibly strong and invincible back then. It can be suggested that this image is how the speaker wishes to remember Randal. It should be noted that the conflict or problem presented in the octave is the speaker's shock and grief about Randal's passing. The sestet offers comfort as the speaker realises he can hold on to their memories as a form of solace.

Despite a smaller number of learners for Hopkins' "Felix Randal" session, the generated data was notably interesting as I received lengthy, heartfelt responses about how they could visualise their own lives and experiences in the poem. All the responses state that the poem concerns a sickly man who has died due to a disease, although one learner thought it was the speaker's child. What stands out for this research participant is that before he passed on, the speaker encouraged Felix Randal to attend Church so that he could be baptised and find eternal peace. This religious element was noted by participants and will be touched on later. In agreement with Bleich's subjective criticism, the poem stirs up some deep-seated memories for a learner as she indicates that she can strongly identify with the poem because her aunt almost passed away due to cancer. She laments that the poem reminds her of the emotional turmoil her family had experienced. When she first learned of her aunt's diagnosis, she visualised flashbacks of all their treasured memories. The detailed response further adds that the poem's lesson is to teach the reader to value and appreciate time with loved ones as life is unpredictable. She can also identify with the religious element of the poem as she is a believer in God and she believes that Felix Randal was saved by God, who will hopefully forgive him. This feeling of content in the reader and identification with themes present in the poem, is an echo of Iser's phenomenological reader response theory as she engages with the elements of the poem whilst reverting to her own experiences and memories in order to make sense of what she perceives as the take-away message. Furthermore, her personality and belief system are large contributing factors to her reading experience, and this lends itself to the psychological underpinnings of Bleich's subjective criticism and Holland's transactive criticism. Another research participant argues that Felix Randal could have been one of his family members and postulates an argument for the existence of Mitchell Plain's cyclic process of poverty and misfortunes. He shares that in Mitchells Plain, residents die- either due to natural causes or murders as the social ills of gangsterism and poverty are rife. On a positive note, someone can identify with the poem because she believes that priests and teachers are comparable because both parties care about people and want to see them succeed. It is clear that "plaisir" dominated the responses as research participants can engage and strongly relate to the literary text's proposed messages.

Vultures

Well-known and celebrated African literary giant Chinua Achebe has often said that "Art has a social purpose and can influence things." (cited in Granqvist 28). Achebe's free verse poem proposes a philosophical question to the reader about the nature of evil, more specifically, if

someone is capable of evil, are they still capable of love? This discovery unfolds in two parts- an examination on the behaviour of vultures and references to the Holocaust Concentration Camps. A gloomy mood of dread opens the poem and it is conveyed by words such as “greyness” (line 1), which describes the sky, and “despondent dawn” (lines 2-3) which personifies the dawn as being of low motivation and unhappy. The speaker then brings in the image of two vultures who are notoriously predatory animals. The first vulture we encounter is “perching high on broken bone of a dead tree” (lines 5-6) and this alliteration of the ‘b’ sound is directly harsh and reinforces the dark and depressing image. The vulture is standing on a “dead tree”, which suggests that even nature itself is lifeless. Words such as “bashed-in head” (line 9), “gross” (line 11) and “swollen” (line 14) are strong adjectives of a negative nature which provide us with images of the vultures as disgusting creatures. A juxtaposition is created as they are snuggling “affectionately” (line 12) against each other. The reader is presented with the two contrasts of the vulture- both as animals of disgust and evil, but also capable of love and care. The speaker describes the horrific actions of the vultures as they have feasted on the eyes and stomach of a dead animal. It is natural of the vultures to engage in these acts but there is still a sense of aversion in the reader’s mind. The phrase “cold telescopic eyes” (line 20-21) can be considered irony as it suggests that the vultures are able to see at great distances but perhaps they are unable to see the cruel nature of their behaviour. The question of love and affection within a cruel person is reinforced. Lines 21 to 29 state, “Strange indeed how love in other ways so particular will pick a corner in that charnel-house tidy it and coil up there, perhaps even fall asleep - her face turned to the wall!” and these statements are worthy of discussion as the utilisation of personification and allusion here is striking. Love is personified as a woman who makes herself comfortable in a human slaughter facility which houses human skeletons. The usage of the word “thus” (line 30) in the third quatrain tells the reader that the rest of the information further emphasises the idea that the reader has seen in the first half of the poem- namely the notion that cruel, evil people are still capable of human affection and love. The speaker references an official at Bergen Belsen, a Nazi Concentration Camp, who commits horrific, unspeakable deeds during the working day yet will go home and shower his children with luxuries and adoration. The reader is forced to consider whether this kind of false behaviour is ethical and acceptable. The descriptive line, “human roast clinging rebelliously to his hairy nostrils” (lines 33-35) causes the reader to squirm with hatred and condemnation. The word “Daddy” in line 39 further highlights the fact that this cruel official, responsible for the genocide of millions, is a beloved parent. It is as if he is unashamed. The final quatrain makes a religious reference in

“bounteous” (line 41) and talks about a vibrant glow worm in the cold heart of an ogre- an, evil mythical creature. The idea here is that the “perpetuity of evil” (lines 50-51) exists, even in the “kindred” (line 49) state of love. This therefore means that a wholesome, morally good individual is capable of hatred, racism, prejudice and bullying. The poem thus ends on a negative, depressing tone.

The data analysis of Achebe’s “Vultures” is fascinating as it unearths a strong reader identification with the community of Mitchells Plain and its social ills, amongst virtually all the learners. It is the only poem in the study which has elicited a consistent response of this nature- perhaps due to the relevance of an African author. These findings will show a specific reference to gangsterism, the evil nature of people, general social ills and feelings of hopelessness. It can be argued that these topical issues for Mitchells Plain learners, stirred up interest. Being very much in accordance with Fish’s experiential reader response theory and the concept of “interpretive communities” and “interpretative strategies” as delineated by society, the adjective, “evil” appears a few times in the responses. “There’s a lot of evil going on in Mitchells Plain” is something stated by a research participant. Another learner shares that, “evil things happen in places we ought to feel safe in ...corruption dominates”. For many of the learners in the study, this “evil” is represented by gangsterism in Mitchells Plain and this is a collective agreement which leads them to interpret the poem through this lens. Firstly, the opening image of the vultures feasting on a corpse has left an impression on a research participant who argues that it immediately causes her to think about gangsters and how they operate in the community. A Tafelsig resident, who laments that the suburb is “another word for a sad story” states that the poem conjures up feelings relating to her community as whenever she walks outside, she notices starving children and opportunistic gangsters. A similar lamentation comes from a concerned learner as she shares that gangsters control her community and they coerce boys to join their gangs. According to her, a refusal to join a gang leads these boys to be stigmatised as homosexuals or cowards. Her cousin joined a gang due to this dilemma. Despite this, she still cares deeply for him.

A striking answer arose from a learner who links gangsterism with the theme of abuse versus love. The poem enables her to reflect on violence and warfare between rival gangs which constitutes “abuse”. However, she explains that, “I think it is about someone trying to take care of his own but in turn, is harming others.” Further elaboration includes the idea that these gangsters commit heinous crimes yet simultaneously show respect to elders in the community. This juxtaposition between goodness and evil is part of the mainstream reading of the poem. The vultures and human characters in the poem can express both love and evil. This reading was echoed by another learner who presents the argument that the demeanour of

vultures and humans are somewhat similar in that vultures show love and care for their family, yet they are considered evil in their own sense as they are carnivores. She further adds that humans are affectionate and loving yet capable of evil because they have “cruel ways”. One learner echoes these thoughts by stating that the forces of evil and love are present in his school. These responses indicate that an individual’s interactive internal debate about their own beliefs and the ideas present in the text may be viewed in accordance with Iser’s phenomenological reader response theory.

“Vultures” has led a few learners to think about other social ills present in Mitchells Plain, such as poverty, domestic violence, substance abuse and familial rape. A learner comments that in the community, residents often use their houses as drug houses which affects the children. An unusual, concerning response came from a research participant who reveals that when she feels betrayed by friends, as a form of revenge, she feels an urge to take them to an abandoned house and torture them, “for betraying my trust”. This raw emotion which has been tapped into, is what Bleich terms as “affect”. Broken friendships will be touched on later again. The challenging socio-economic conditions of Mitchells Plain is referenced in one response which notes that the poem reminds her of family because parents sacrifice so much in order to ensure their children are comfortable and taken care of, as survival is the most important priority. Viewing the poem through the lens of poverty and hardship is once again a reference to Bleich’s subjective criticism, as the reader’s personal varied circumstances are informing their reading experience.

Quite a few research participants can identify with the poem as they feel it covers the issue of friends who cannot be trusted. Their concerns are friends who are not supportive during tough periods and friends who are friendly to one’s face but then they gossip behind one’s back. Similarly, a research participant declares that the members of her community are like the vultures in the poem as they metaphorically also feast from a dead corpse and then cuddle it with affection. She translated this as them being two-faced and not genuine. Someone else considers the vultures to be a metaphor for gangsters as they cause havoc and problems in Mitchells Plain.

While reading the poem, several learners also interpreted a theme of hopelessness. For one research participant, the poem is about an individual who has lost hope and courage yet manages to still show affection. She can relate because she has lost hope in her family. She adds that Mitchells Plain is a place where people have lost hope for a variety of reasons. In addition, evil elements are present due to the high crime rates and the notion that children cannot play outside in the streets because of these perpetrators of crime. A learner describes the poem as “deep” and considers the message to be about a lonely, depressed individual.

This learner experiences external pressure from people who are “bad influences”. She argues that bad deeds have a snowball effect: “It begins with something small and builds up to many things”. Some of these influences are reportedly present at her school. A further interesting comment was made regarding human nature- “Sometimes in order for people to perform good, kind acts, they need to be bad.” One of the only two interpretations relating to religion or God stated that the poem is about someone who has lost all sense of hope and wants to give up on life. This person is “waiting to be saved by God.”

The poem has encouraged one learner to contemplate what she considers are possible negative effects, of engaging in friendships with someone from another culture. According to her, it is problematic if you have friends who have different “ways” or “culture” because they were raised with different customs. She adds that this makes it very difficult to follow one’s own culture. Interestingly, her response can be interpreted through the lens of Bleich, Fish or Iser. A rather surprising interpretation came from a learner who asserts that the poem is about the loving connection between a father and daughter. They spend time together to strengthen their relationship. She references the part of the poem where the father stops at the store to buy chocolate for his children. According to her, this shows that he cares for his daughter and she excitedly awaits his return at home. She can identify with this image as she adds that she experiences the same situation everyday as she always waits for her father to come home, but “sometimes he does not reach home”. This line in her response is quite ominous.

The theme of colonialism and the mistreatment and prejudice of Africans by colonial masters is evident in the poem according to a research participant. He notes that the vultures are the colonisers who abuse the Africans because of their different skin colour and culture. Evidently, almost all of the learners engaged with “Vultures” in an act of “plaisir” as they agreed with the expressed values, scenarios and sentiments.

An African Elegy

The Nigerian poet and novelist Ben Okri’s work has been described by literary critics as “post-colonial”, “postmodern” and “magical realism” (Fulford 233). He has rejected all these labels as one of his core beliefs is that the power of words, especially from those in influential places, are able to build, yet also break down (Fraser 9). Okri’s 1996 essay, “Beyond Words” explains this point clearly. In the essay, he states that one’s words have the potential to create a faux reality which can have dire consequences (Fraser 1). In other words,

silence is considered the best policy (Fraser 1). Okri's novels revolve around the relationship between the downtrodden individual and the others, whether it is the community or family (Fraser 20). The individual's only solace is personal space where he can flourish despite community pressure and social ills (Fraser 20-21).

Okri's elegy is ironic as it is not a poem concerning death but has more philosophical undertones. The speaker appeals to the spirit of Africa to reveal answers to serious questions which many Africans face. These questions concern the essence of being African such as the ability to survive and be resilient. The "We" and "our" in the beginning of the poem refers to an inclusive identity of African people- people born and living on the continent. Unfortunately, history has not been kind to generations of Africans which is why the speaker references how God made them "to taste the bitter fruit of Time." as seen in line 2. Examples would be slavery, colonisation, genocide and poverty. The speaker concludes the quatrain with a sense of hope as in the future, their hardships will prove to be worthwhile. The speaker becomes increasingly appreciative about the positive, optimistic nature of Africans, as the poem progresses. He says they suffer poverty-stricken lifestyles ("we bear poverty"- line 9) yet are still upbeat in their attitude and hopes for the future ("And are able to sing and dream sweet things"- line 10). Africans have become accustomed to the extremely high temperatures and embrace it as demonstrated in line 11 with, "And that we never curse the air when it is warm". The important lines of this quatrain are lines 14 and 15: "We bless things even in our pain. We bless them in silence". The speaker is commending the nation's positive attitude in the face of hardship and struggle. He discusses this tenacity as "secret miracles" (line 18) as they are hard to understand but a gift, such as a blessing in disguise. The reference to "the dead singing" (line 20) could perhaps be a reference to the traditional belief of ancestors. These ancestors are encouraging the living to continue, press on, and enjoy every facet of African-ness. This is evident in lines 21 to 24: "And they tell me that this life is good, they tell me to live if gently with fire, and always with hope".

The final quatrain centres on the natural world which is important within African cosmology. Their natural surroundings are alive, energetic and worthy of respect and praise. The concluding line of the poem, "Destiny is our friend" (line 30) can be interpreted as a call to Africans to embrace their unique identity and all implications thereof, as even the negative implications can be viewed through a positive lens. A small cohort engaged with "An African Elegy" but nevertheless, learners seemed to enjoy and feel inspired by the poem. One research participant is convinced that the poem's message is that there is life after death and she shares that, "The speaker is telling us to not fear death because once we die, our pain and hardships dissipate." She relates this idea to school and how learners should appreciate their

teachers and the opportunity of education before it is all gone as death is inevitable. Furthermore, family and relationships are miracles which we are blessed with and God accepts us for who we are. The general sentiments expressed are that human beings need to have intense gratitude for everything especially nature and loved ones. The next chapter will serve as a discussion on possible limitations present in the study and the state schooling system. I will also provide recommendations on how WCED and Universities can improve the current state of English teaching.

Chapter 4

Limitations to the research

I observed several factors which may have impacted the data collection process. As part of this process, learners were required to answer a questionnaire by writing down their answers on sheets of provided paper. This technique could have been limiting to some learners in two ways. Firstly, I am aware that in one learner's response, she wrote that she can identify with the poem and it conjures up a lot of thoughts, but she does not have the time or energy to write all of it down. Secondly, the concept of learning styles is appropriate here. There has been a constant development in educational literature regarding how learners absorb and process information. It is generally believed that they access information through each or a combination of, the four senses such as visual, auditory, visual/iconic and kinaesthetic (Bhagat, Vyas and Singh 58). I believe it is possible that perhaps learners who are more inclined to their aural capacities would not have fared well with the written questionnaire as they prefer to learn and express themselves by means of verbal discussions (Bhagat, Vyas and Singh 58). One could also argue that kinaesthetic learners' answers were not properly obtained as they would have preferred a situation where we physically conducted the data collection on the school sports field and constructed a dance or hand formations according to each question and possible answer. Learning styles is something I have learnt in Undergraduate Psychology and it is also a topic I have taught to Grade 8 Life Orientation learners. Admittedly, in the first contact session of data collection, I encouraged a focus group discussion of learners' responses, but they were very reluctant to share their answers with the rest of the class. I considered that they were possibly embarrassed, shy or not wanting to fault their persona of being "cool". One learner who managed to verbally share his answers with the rest of the class, garnered some laughter from his peers, which proved my assumption correct. I therefore attempted to incorporate variation for mixed ability learners

but in hindsight, I believe that time constraints, psychology and practicalities led to my utilisation of the written questionnaires. If I ever conduct similar research in the future, I will ensure that the data collection tool is more inclusive. Additionally, in terms of these questionnaires, it could be argued that some learners felt limited in their capacity of expression owing to the fact that they had to supply their names alongside their answers. A learner may have possibly not revealed their honest opinions or experiences out of fear of embarrassment or shame. Any future related research will rectify this shortcoming. For the present study, I typed out their responses in verbatim in order to protect their anonymity.

As I have just mentioned, time constraint was a glaring issue. I decided to work with Grade 12 learners who are in their final year of formal schooling and, by nature, have limited contact time with their teachers. I was unaware that securing sessions with Grade 12 learners would be this problematic. I contacted a variety of Mitchells Plain high schools as I wanted to collect as much data as possible. Understandably, I was rejected numerous times because teachers were unwilling to surrender their classes. Additionally, I am a full-time high school English teacher who is teaching every day from 7.30 to 3.30 which also proved to be difficult in terms of time negotiations. The challenging environment of Mitchells Plain was problematic as learners were unavailable on weekends or after school. I was told by a teacher that this is due to gang violence and other problematic daily occurrences.

Unfortunately, low learner motivation was a negative factor which arose during the study. Having taught in Mitchells Plain, I can argue that the average learner is not academically strong or even eager to be at school and participate in schoolwork activities. When I interacted with one of the cohorts of research participants, it was the very last period on a Thursday, in the middle of summer. Every educator knows that the last period is a perplexing one as learners are physically and mentally exhausted. It can be argued that some learners' tiring state, coupled with low academic motivation, affected their answers. Judging by most of the cohorts, I believe that learners were generally keen to participate although I observed a few who were very demotivated and hardly wrote down any responses. I also acknowledge the fact that my data collection may have been viewed as a test or task to some learners which would explain their lack of enthusiasm.

Expectations from the school also possibly affected the data collection. I initially promised the schools that I would also teach the mainstream readings of the poems. Unfortunately, once I was in the field collecting the data, I did not realise that time was working against me. I attempted to fulfil my obligation by teaching some of the poems, but this obligation meant I sometimes gave the learners limited time to answer the questionnaires. It must be noted that two of the three data collection sessions occurred during the June school holidays. The cohort at the one school appeared in casual clothes and were of

a relaxed demeanour. This must be owing to the psychological breakaway from formal schooling and they were encouraged to let their guard down and feel comfortable. I believe this group was more open and made themselves mentally and emotionally available to the study. In contrast, a cohort at the other school were in their full school uniform and the day was very formalised. They sat in structured lessons with a bell denoting break time. I noticed that some of these learners were demotivated and almost rebellious. I sympathised with them as it was their school holiday, yet it barely resembled a break from schooling.

Recommendations

Reconsider the roles and responsibilities of the educator

I will now turn the chapter's discussion to recommendations which I believe would greatly benefit the teaching of English Home Language in state schools, and in turn, lead to the promotion of reader response theory. It can be argued that the Department of Basic Education has a flawed vision of their goals for educators and problematic assessment standards. One of the essential documents for South African educators is the "Norms and Standards for Educators". It was formulated in February 2000 under the guidance of then-Minister of Basic Education Kader Asmal and various key stakeholders in the education industry. The policy document forms guidelines of roles and strategies for what the Department of Basic Education describes as "competent educators". There are seven outlined roles but for this chapter, I will only focus on the roles of "learning mediator", "learning and subject specialist", "community, citizenship and pastoral" and "assessor". The role of the learning mediator denotes that the competent educator is required to use teaching methodologies and approaches which are inclusive to the varying needs, abilities of all learners in the classroom (Department of Basic Education 13). The educator should consider: learning styles and developmental stages of learners, as well as their cultural, ethnic and language profile (Department of Basic Education 13). The lessons also need to inspire and promote higher order thinking skills and the breakdown of societal stereotypes (Department of Basic Education 15). Additionally, the educator's career must be prioritised with considerable effort because they ought to utilise their own time to research relevant material, arguments and innovations in their subject (Department of Basic Education 14). In terms of the community, citizenship and pastoral competency, the educator needs to be conscious of learners who hold differing beliefs, cultures and practices (Department of Basic Education 18). Importantly, they must be able to rise to the challenge of tackling social

issues permeating the classroom and school, such as violence, substance abuse, poverty and abuse (Department of Basic Education 18). Lastly, the educator as the assessor is one of the most highly-discussed areas in most school staff rooms around the country. The policy documents state that the educator must be aware of the requirements and reasons for assessment tasks (Department of Basic Education 21). They must design assessments which are in accordance with standards set by the relevant education authorities (Department of Basic Education 21).

I have discussed these goals and competencies for educators because I want to highlight the notion that the competent educator as envisioned by the Department of Basic Education is the type of educator that Mitchells Plain schools need. This educator is sensitive to the cultural, religious and developmental needs of the learner and has an awareness and willingness to help learners overcome the challenges of social ills whilst researching the latest developments in English teaching strategies. However, unfortunately this is idealistic and arguably many educators working in Mitchells Plain, and most other areas, do not fit these guidelines. I have spoken to educators in Mitchells Plain and having worked there myself, I can confirm that it is a constant struggle to teach these learners who have a myriad of social issues and conditions as they enter the classroom. I have sat in countless staff meetings with desperate educators and management who acknowledge that their learners experience “home issues” but do not know how to handle these issues which render them “unteachable”. The Department of Basic Education expects these competencies from educators but fails to assist them in achieving these goals. Psychological intervention techniques such as how to debrief and counsel learners are not part of the requirements of becoming an educator. Most schools in Mitchells Plain do not have counsellors or psychologists which begs the question of how the educator can step in and alleviate these arising issues if they are not equipped with the tools and knowledge. One of the schools in the study has a feeding scheme which provides sandwiches for learners every day. Most of these children do not have steady meals at home, and given the high rate of unemployment, it is sufficient to say that they cannot afford a counsellor or psychologist.

Lastly, I contend that many learners in the study walked away from the process with a deeper understanding of themselves and an arsenal of new skills. They also became quite familiar with the poems which could only serve as an advantage. The educators I engaged with, displayed a fascination and curiosity to reader response theory. Further to this, one of the research participants approached me with a beaming smile as she was genuinely excited by the data collection and asked further questions about the tenets of the theory. This is only

partial evidence which indicates that this approach to literature is successful and much more valuable than formalism. I believe a major shortcoming is that in the assessment guidelines set by the Department of Basic Education are flawed because reader response theory is not implemented. Although the CAPS policy document subtly encourages a reader response approach, as outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, I have yet to meet a state school educator who is aware of this approach. State schools mark all poetry contextual and essay questions according to a strict marking memo which is made available to all educators marking the examination, and it is the expectation that the educator will not deviate from it. The personal voice and experiences of the learner when they encounter the poem are automatically rejected. The poetry assessment operates on a formalist approach and the increasing research published on reader response theory shows that this kind of viewpoint is archaic. According to Moodley in “In-Service Teacher Education: Asking Questions for Higher Order Thinking in Visual Literacy” (2013), a problem with South African schooling is that many educators are not trained to release the potential in learners’ minds and “create cognitive pathways that eventually lead to the literacy skills that enhance scholastic performance” (2). To reiterate, reader response theory enables learners to channel their past experiences, memories, opinions and thoughts in their engagement with the poetry, thus creating unique, rich data but unfortunately, most South African teachers rather prefer to police the learner’s personal experience with poetry.

Nurturing the mental health of Mitchell Plain high school learners

Resilience refers to an adolescent’s capacity and awareness of, and ability to work through their emotional and social challenges (Kruger and Prinsloo 242). This includes the ability to successfully attempt to adapt to negative or unexpected life circumstances whether on a small or large scale. In the process of being exposed to life’s challenges, the adolescent develops and progresses in character (Kruger and Prinsloo 242). The Department of Basic Education should consider the type of values they are espousing in the curriculum. The theory of values education states that it works if it is implemented in all corners of a school with contributions and effort by all role players such as management, teachers, support staff, students and parents (Maphalala and Mpofo 9). Educators need to unite and emphasise values education in the manner of their behaviour, speech and teaching methods. A large portion of the average day of a learner is spent inside a classroom which is why it is the ideal location to emit values. It is the duty of the educator to shape the learners’ mentality into realising that values

should not only be located on school premises, but outside the classroom as well (Maphalala and Mpofu 9). Unfortunately, as previously mentioned, high schools in Mitchells Plain do not typically have psychologists or counsellors who form part of the staff body. More upmarket schools are financially able to employ these much-needed professionals. The onus is on Western Cape Education Department to provide schools with adequate funding for the employment of psychologists or counsellors. It must be noted that due to the distressing nature of some of the responses in the data collection, counselling services have been offered to the research participants of this study as a precautionary measure.

Recommendations for English literature education

I will now focus on recommendations for how the Department of Basic Education and Universities can support and mould good English teachers and in effect, spread the awareness and implementation of reader response theory. The Funza Lushaka bursary is offered annually by the Department of Basic Education to students wishing to study teaching. It was introduced as an initiative to promote the profession within South Africa. The bursary covers full tuition fees for all four years of Bachelor of Education and the single year of the Postgraduate Certificate of Education. However, their strict selection criteria mean that only students studying subjects which are “identified areas of priority” are usually successful in their application.

The current application form lists the following priority areas: In the Intermediate and Senior Phase, the preferred candidate must major in two of the following subjects: Languages, Mathematics, and Natural Science & Technology (Department of Basic Education n. pag). In the Further Education and Training Phase, their preference list includes languages, although the list is exhaustive with mainly science and mathematics-based subjects (Department of Basic Education n. pag). Interestingly, they state that a successful candidate needs to have two of the priority subjects as specialisation (Department of Basic Education n. pag). This lesser-known criterion is unfortunate for budding English teachers as it is unlikely that they will also be majoring in subjects such as Accounting, Civil Technology, Economics and Physical Sciences.

I am therefore arguing that those wishing to study English are at an unfair disadvantage and South Africa needs to cultivate English teachers. In almost all schools across the Western Cape in particular, English is a compulsory subject. If additional teachers are trained in English, and reader response, the reach would be boundless as I have discussed that there are many added benefits to the reader response approach. Since most University students rely on bursaries or some form of financial aid, the implication is that the

Department of Basic Education is not assisting the development of more English teachers. This issue needs to be corrected as English poetry, which was explained earlier in the thesis, is a wondrous and beneficial discipline. If more novice English teachers are encouraged to join the profession, there will hopefully be an increase of University graduates introducing new, emerging theories into the English classroom, such as reader response theory. Unfortunately, another institutional stumbling block for novice teachers is that the University of Cape Town's Postgraduate Certificate in Education curriculum has compulsory conversational Xhosa and conversational Afrikaans modules (School of Education n. pag). The reality is that many South Africans are barely competent in one or both these languages and will therefore struggle to complete this qualification due to the high standards set by UCT. I am not criticising this effort by UCT to develop linguistically-inclusive teachers but by making these courses compulsory, they are inadvertently setting the goal posts at a great distance.

Factors to consider regarding the selection of literary texts

For this recommendation, I will first draw on the work of academics and then provide advisory comments with relation to the current Grade 12 English Home Language poems which form the central axis of this research project. Educational scholars Elizabeth E.G. Friese, Donna Alvermann, Adam Parkes and Achariya T. Rezak postulate that English educators select literary texts for two reasons. Firstly, they may choose a novel based on their students' keen hobbies and psychological or educational needs (Friese et al. 75). Secondly, English educators select texts from a state departmental-sanctioned reading list of prescribed texts (Friese et al. 75). In terms of the poetry in question, educators are obligated to follow the standard list of prescribed poems although schools are given more freedom of choice as they can decide which novel and drama they want to select for their matriculants. For example, for Drama study, a school may select William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. An inclusive factor of concern for text selection is to make allowance for people with reading disabilities (Friese et al. 75). Unfortunately, although Inclusive Education is in practice at some schools, there are many state schools that do not accommodate for learners with reading impairments such as dyslexia and as a result, these learners are doomed to fall behind their peers. The reality is that the average teacher is not trained in Inclusive Education and this is an issue which ought to be remedied. An additional considerable factor to take into account is that the literary text selection is also dependant on students' agreement to open themselves up to certain topics of interest (Friese et al. 76). An

example would be a novel on interracial relationships, genocide or child molestation. The function of the text is important which generally means that people who are responsible for

selecting texts need to ascertain whether a text is for technical reading purposes, the dissemination of knowledge or for pure reading pleasure (Friese et al. 77). Interestingly, Friese and others argue that responsible parties can ascertain if a particular literary text is appropriate for a cohort of students by utilising them in a trial period and then evaluating the success afterwards (77). It is unclear what the Department of Basic Education's motives were but I believe the poems were not offered for the bliss of reading and perhaps this is an issue which needs to be taken into account. The average adolescent does not want to read poetry about their own demise as demonstrated in "Remember". It can be argued that adolescents generally want to read about topical, relatable issues which spark interest and conversation. I contend that a poem like "A Hard Frost" was only selected in order to provide technical structural knowledge to learners, which is perplexing because the poem is rather challenging for a high school learner to deconstruct which impedes their ability to understand the themes and message. A reader cannot understand a poem if they are struggling to read it. The Department of Basic Education should consider removing the poem.

Sometimes teachers select literary texts based on their own first-hand accounts of their experience with the texts (Friese et al. 77) which may explain why most of the poems are from bygone literary eras and not modern periods. The English modules at University are overflowing with texts from classical periods and it may very well be that the authorities were exposed to these texts and had a favourable experience. This does not mean that their positive experience will translate to the average South African high school learner who is not an immense lover of the abstract genre of poetry.

The critic Chris Lima states that good literary text selection is dependent on alternative methods of assessment (112). This means that education authorities ought to select texts which are able to fit this criterion. In terms of state schooling in South Africa, there should be a shift away from the standard comprehension questions in order to test learners' understanding. More appropriate methods would be writing exercises, presentations or oral discussions (Lima 112). This point is notable as South Africa's extreme formalist focus on poetry is consistently coupled with outdated assessment measures whereas a reader response approach to teaching would open up more pathways to expression and comprehension.

Another factor affecting text selection is that a literary text may also be considered if they are not part of the normal social reality of the learners, which means the purpose of its inclusion is to introduce students to another type of world, culture or way of thinking

(Friese et al. 77). This crucial argument is strengthened by researchers Fenice B. Boyd, Lauren L. Causey and Lee Galda in “Culturally Diverse Literature: Enriching Variety in an Era of Common Core State Standards” (2015) as they assert the incumbent need for students to engage with literature featuring characters of different races, cultures and religions. Notably, this discussion of diversity also refers to the inclusion of literary characters who possess mental and physical disabilities, language dialects, family dynamics and gender identity (Boyd et al. 379). Understandably, management and teachers on the ground level must be positive change-makers by actively seeking the implementation of this kind of literature (Boyd et al. 380). It is important to note that culturally-diverse literature also needs to uphold the uppermost tenets of authenticity as racial and gender stereotypes are incredibly problematic (Boyd et al. 383). This discussion is crucial for the poetry in the present study but also presents a dichotomy. I believe the literary texts in the curriculum should help students engage with other cultures, lifestyles and worldviews but at the same time, there should be poems which are relatable and appeal to them on their level of lived experience. Interestingly, the poems in the study pander to both categories. In terms of being relatable, “Funeral Blues”, “Vultures” and “Felix Randal” showed a strong sense of identification amongst respondents. I believe “Funeral Blues” was also a missed opportunity for the Department of Basic Education as it could have exposed learners to the realm of other diverse lifestyles. In plain terms, most critics believe the speaker, who is a male, is mourning the loss of his gay partner. This could be a prime opportunity to educate students on homosexuality and tolerance but unfortunately nowhere in the Department of Basic Education’s promoted textbooks, is there a mention of this reading. There is no doubt that the selected poems in the study are somewhat diverse as the poets are of varying countries, races, cultures and traditions but to reiterate, the erasure of homosexuality and female poetic contributions is unsettling.

Some literary texts should be chosen if they connect different subjects across the curriculum (Watkins and Ostenson 258). “Vultures” is a good example of successful connection between English and History as students study the Holocaust in Grade 9 History. Similarly, Watkins and Ostenson agree that it is important to consider whether students ought to be acquainted with a certain set of knowledge before they can understand the context of the literary text (249). This point is in agreement with Vardell, Hadaway and Young (2016). This issue is problematic and affects many of the poems which have been discussed. “A Hard Frost” has various general references which need to be understood before the mainstream reading can be understood. With “The Garden of Love”, it is imperative that educators

provide the context of the Church and its controlling laws on the pleasures and experiences of British citizens. It is not an arduous task to supply background knowledge when teaching poems but it is a factor which should be taken into account. A common oversight about selecting poems is the notion that students may need to access poems visually. In plain terms, the typographical structure of a poem which enforces its message, may be more successful in conveying certain ideas to learners than a poem that is merely written in a standard structure (Vardell, Hadaway and Young 739). Also, inspiring the learner is of prime importance when choosing literary texts (Friese et al. 81) yet the Department of Basic Education largely selected ‘depressing’ and dark poems which concern the death of loved ones, one’s own mortality and the evil nature of people. It is unbelievable to consider the fact that we are in 2019 yet only one female poet has made the cut, according to the Department of Basic Education’s selection standards. To compound this issue, all the prescribed set works are also by male authors. As a country, we have made colossal strides in the past 30 years, yet this glaring error is a considerable regression. It could be argued that some female research participants’ answers were affected when they noticed that the poem was written by a male.

As expressed, the learners struggled to understand or identify with “A Hard Frost” and I can understand why. The language is complex, and the themes are irrelevant to South African adolescents. It is baffling to consider how this poem was chosen. Another famous poem by Day-Lewis, “Walking Away”, is well-studied in the Grade 10 English Home Language curriculum and learners respond well to it. The poem concerns themes relating to the transition from childhood to adolescence and the emotional and psychological impact on the parent. My point is, there are other Cecil Day-Lewis poems which encourage an identifiable connection with high school learners. I am therefore unsure as to why “A Hard Frost” was selected.

It can be argued that teaching “Remember” is borderline bizarre as these students are 17-year olds who have barely started their journey of adulthood. They are already faced with death in their communities and now they are forced to confront the startling idea of their own death and whether they want their families to mourn and remember them. However, I must concede that “Funeral Blues” and “Felix Randal” provided excellent insight into the participants’ minds, memories and experiences. I believe this is because the death occurs to another character and not the personalised first-person narrator, like in “Remember”. Other poems which also proved highly successful in teaching us about social identification were “Vultures” and “The Garden of Love”. The wondrous part of this study is that these learners encountered the poems in their own manner with their unique perceptions and experiences and it yielded an immense amount of data which has revealed more about the issues they face

in their communities. A few of the most prevalent issues which arose from the data collection were gangsterism and murders- common occurrences in Mitchells Plain.

Concluding thoughts

The study began due to a unique curiosity and desire to explore whether the newly-implemented poems by the Department of Basic Education are the correct fit for current Grade 12 learners thriving in a post-Apartheid climate of multiculturalism and personal as well as socio-economic diversity. The exploration was channelled through asking the question of which social factors in Mitchells Plain learners lived experiences enabled them to identify with the poems in question. The concern of researching social identification arose from the scholarship of Louise Rosenblatt, Lawrence R. Sipe and Roland Barthes who agree that identification is an important concept to consider in the study of literature as readers, especially adolescents, experience comfort and the release of tensions when they encounter worldviews, themes or characters in a literary text with which they can identify. International English literature teaching approaches have adapted to the rise of multicultural classrooms with methods largely suited towards an approach of tolerance and understanding. This trend is also applicable to local classrooms as studies have shown that English teachers utilise the contact time with learners to affect positive change in the learners' attitudes and acceptance of different races, cultures and religions. Although a problem arises when examining the state of literature teaching in South African schools as it is important to note that in official policy documents, literature teaching should be coupled with a reader response approach although this practice is not occurring on the ground level as teachers are forced to adopt a formalist approach to teaching and knowledge is assessed according to a standard memorandum which allows no room for a learner's personal interpretation. Despite this shortcoming, there are many recent studies concerning South African education which offer valuable insight into other factors affecting the classroom such as learner discipline, overcrowded classrooms, literacy levels, student leadership and Inclusive Education.

The two high schools which formed part of the sample population of the study are situated in Mitchells Plain, Cape Town because it is a suburb offering a myriad of social challenges and character. These learners endure circumstances in their home environment which accompany them into the classroom and mould their experience with literature. With a study of social identification, Mitchells Plain was therefore the obvious choice. Mitchells Plain is located in the Cape Flats and was formed due to the Apartheid government's Group Areas Act and the most recent studies paint a bleak picture of

contributory factors to social ills which are notorious in Mitchells Plain such as poverty, violence, illicit substance use and gangsterism. As the thesis discussion has demonstrated, these social problems, with some being unique to the Cape Flats, permeate every facet of learners' lives. This notion has been proven to be correct as the data analysis revealed personal struggles, fears and experiences relating to these social ills. The results of the present study will be discussed a bit later. In order to properly engage with current Grade 12 learners in the state education system, it is imperative to grasp an understanding of how much things have changed, and conversely, how much has stayed the same. The Apartheid government had a contentious issue with education as they attempted to further their own agenda by enacting laws which forced certain policies and issues upon learners

The focus of the thesis is on Grade 12 prescribed poetry and there has been considerable scholarship regarding the beneficial qualities of reading and listening to poetry. Writings and even scientific research have attested to the advantages such as the positive emotional and physical effect on the individual. Interestingly, there is agreement that poetry opens one up to the ideas, culture and viewpoints of others and this is why the theorist Probst considers the adolescent to be the ideal reader of literature. The adolescent's general psychological profile enables them to engage with these aspects of poetry as they make sense of themselves and the world around them.

Rosenblatt's reader response approach to literature was ground-breaking at the time because its departure from new criticism meant that more emphasis and responsibility is placed on the reader, instead of the author. Building upon Rosenblatt's foundation, other theorists such as David Bleich, Norman Holland, Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser posited their own reader response theories. Although there is some differentiation, the general consensus is that the reader's personality, experiences, memories, culture and ideals influence their experience of reading a literary text. Also, meaning is enhanced when the readers share their viewpoints and a discussion is generated.

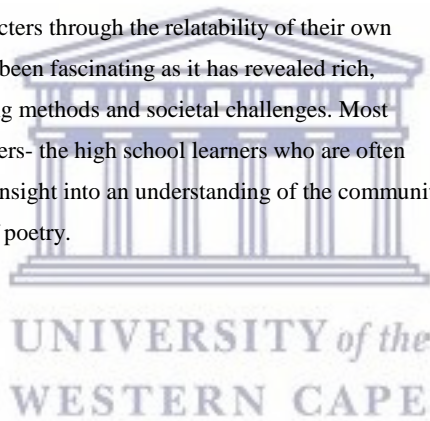
The two high schools which provided the data, are located in Mitchells Plain. The sample population was selected by means of purposive sampling because it was important to select research participants who fit the demands of the research question-. These research participants were Grade 12 students who live and attend school in Mitchells Plain. Also, they had not been taught the poems before which means they did not have an authoritative figure dictate the mainstream meanings of the poems upon them. The data collection tool of open-ended questionnaires enabled the learners to provide qualitative answers to a series of prompting questions, with the promise that their answers would remain anonymous. It must be stressed that the proper steps of ethical consent were sought

and this was conveyed to the learners. It was my duty to put them at ease and let them know that their participation is voluntary and their answers would not be linked to their name at all. I also made it clear that they can opt out of the research process at any time without consequences. It became apparent that some poems were more adept to eliciting fascinating, rich answers compared to others. For instance, firstly, William Blake's "The Garden of Love" which, on a mainstream reading level, speaks about change and the Church's repressive hold on its congregants, mainly led most research participants to consider the deaths and disappearances of their family and community members. Other criminal aspects present in Mitchells Plain were considered by some research participants. Secondly, W.H. Auden's "Funeral Blues", which concerns a protagonist who is mourning the death of their loved one and wishes the whole world to mourn alongside them, elicited many socially-relevant responses which involve deaths, the loss of relationships, religion, school and most importantly, gangsterism. The final poem which challenged learners and allowed them to socially identify is Chinua Achebe's "Vultures". The mainstream reading probes the reader on questions regarding the goodness and evil nature of people. The responses from the reader response engagement are striking as almost all of the research participants can identify with the poem through Mitchells Plain's social problems such as poverty, murder, untrustworthy relationships, rape and gangsterism. Gerard Manley Hopkins' "Felix Randal" was not as successful as the aforementioned poems but the data collection process still garnered very interesting points of discussion about the brevity of life, lost relationships and gangsters present in the community. Unfortunately Christina Rossetti's "Remember", Cecil Day-Lewis' "A Hard Frost" and Ben Okri's "An African Elegy" were misses in the research project possibly due to factors such as hard textual features and an unrelatable preoccupation with death of the self.

It is difficult to pinpoint a specific limitation which affected the data collection process and the results but factors which should be considered in that line of discussion are low motivation within some learners, rigid school setting during the June school holiday, the appearance of the process as a test, the fact that learners were required to provide their names on their responses, time constraints and availability as well as mixed expectations between the school and the researcher. An important takeaway from this study is that the Department of Basic Education needs to reconsider the roles and responsibilities they have set out for educators because if they want educators to embody these values and skills, they need to put measures into place to guide educators along to reach these goals. The Department of Basic Education idealises what it means to be an educator but it is imperative that they are realistic

about challenges. Another main lesson from the study is that assessment standards need to be redrafted to allow a reader response approach to teaching poetry. This research project has proven that reader response can be utilised as a vehicle to access untapped potential, feelings and experiences in the learner which colour and contribute to their engagement of poetry. It is hard to place blame for the current state of education, only on the relevant state education authorities because teacher education at University level presents some flaws which could be perceived as obstacles to potential English teachers.

It is unclear why the Department of Basic Education selected these poems for the syllabus but any selection of a literary text is subjected to several questions such as the purpose or goal of the proposed text, the willingness of learners to open themselves up to the world and issues presented by the text, how the text connects to other subjects across the curriculum and appropriate methods of assessment. Arguably the most striking factor to consider is whether the text proffers an encounter with diversity. These are just some of the important notions to consider regarding literary text selection. A few of these poems allowed learners to identify with the themes and characters through the relatability of their own social circumstances and this exploration has been fascinating as it has revealed rich, colourful data about English literature teaching methods and societal challenges. Most notably, we have learned more about the readers- the high school learners who are often overlooked yet offer incredible and valuable insight into an understanding of the community of Mitchells Plain through their experience of poetry.



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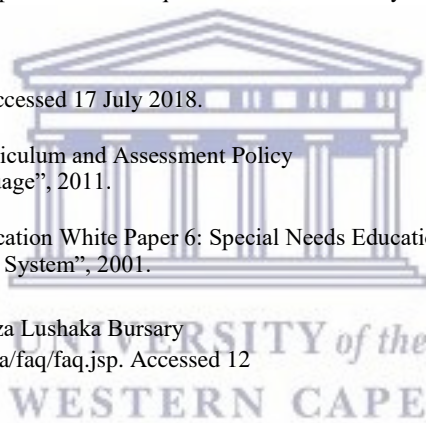
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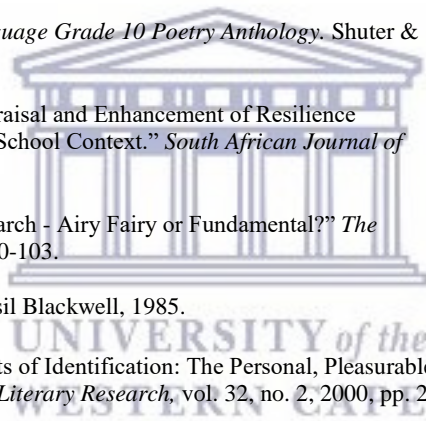
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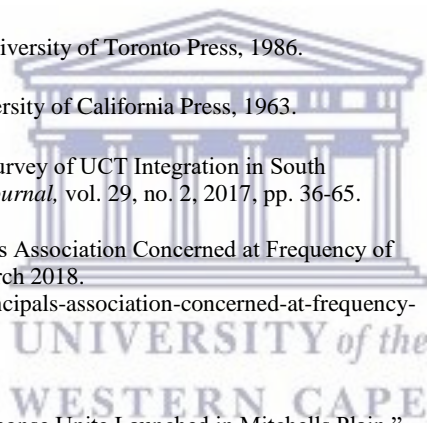
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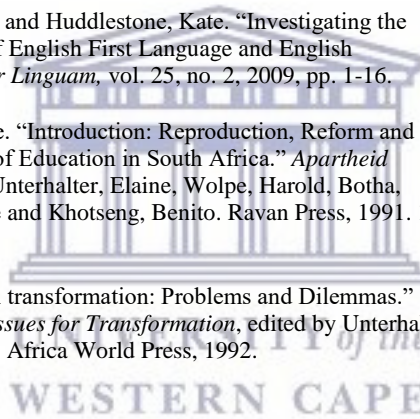
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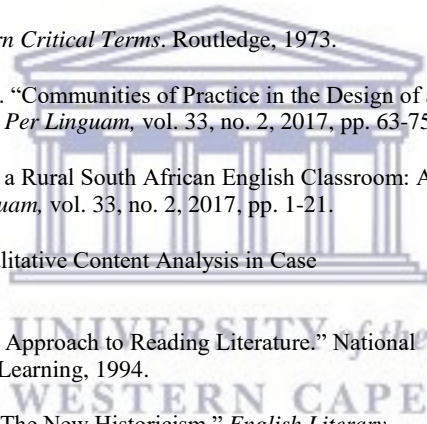
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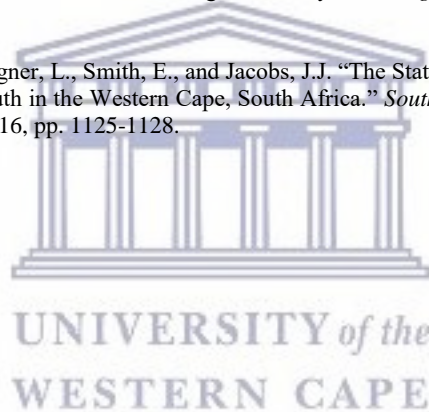
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Index of Addendums

1. University of the Western Cape plagiarism declaration
2. Research Approval letters from the Western Cape Education Department
3. Signed consent forms by the research participants
4. Questionnaires
5. The research participants' answers (transcribed)





UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

Plagiarism Declaration

I declare that "An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry" is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

N. Lawrence

Signed:

 May 2019



Directorate: Research

Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za
tel: +27 021 467 9272
Fax: 0865902282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20171130-7515
ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Ms Naeelah Lawrence
6 Loeloeraai Street
Elim
Kuils River
7580

Dear Ms Naeelah Lawrence

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: AN EXPLORATION OF READER RESPONSE AND SOCIAL IDENTIFICATION WITH GRADE 12 PRESCRIBED POETRY

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 February 2018 till 23 February 2018**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
Directorate: Research
DATE: 01 December 2017

Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001
tel: +27 21 467 9272 fax: 0865902282
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000
Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22
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Directorate: Research

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Directorate: Research
DATE: 18 July 2018

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INFORMATION SHEET

To Parents/ Guardians,

Please share the following with your child. I am currently a Master of Arts (in English) student at the University of the Western Cape.

I am kindly requesting for your son/daughter's participation in my research project. My thesis is titled "**An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.**"

In a nutshell, my aim is to study Grade 12 English Home Language learners' reactions to the prescribed poetry in the curriculum. I am interested in how their social conditions/circumstances/context influence whether they can identify with the themes and characters in the poems. I believe participating in this study will be very beneficial for the learners for various reasons.

- 1) During the research phase, I will teach the learner the prescribed poems thoroughly. We will discuss themes, characters, tone, diction- basically all aspects of the poems. They will therefore be more than well-prepared for their final English paper 2 exam.
- 2) My thesis is based on reader response theory and this theory enables learners to think critically and higher order thinking skills will therefore be activated. The skills they attain can be used in other subjects at school and even outside school.
- 3) Due to the challenging social context of the Cape Flats, I am hoping that participation in this study can be seen as a tool of empowerment for learners, maybe they will even be inspired to pursue tertiary studies and other great things.
- 5) The questions are not only based on the poems but are linked to the learners' own lives. I will ask about their identity, families, current and past experiences. For some, this may be therapeutic which is advantageous.
- 6) This is arguably the first study of its kind, as the Education Department has included these poems for the first time in 2017. This research project is therefore significant on many levels and your child can be a part of that.

Please note that as a UWC Masters researcher, I will follow strict protocol. The identity, human rights and dignity of the learners will be protected at all times. Also, if they do not wish to continue with their participation, they may leave the process at any time, no questions asked. They will be anonymous and only the school's name will be known.

I will possibly conduct research over several days and no teaching time will be interrupted. I believe this study will have a positive impact on learners at the school, and it will be of an academic, social and cognitive benefit. I strongly encourage your child's participation. Please contact me with any questions.

Thanks very much for your support and understanding.
Kind regards

Naeelah Kamaldien student number: 2967264

Contact details: strawberryfieldsforever88@gmail.com 0611183527

UWC Supervisor: Dr Courtney Davids

Contact details: codavids@uwc.ac.za

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Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

Please initial box

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
- 2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should they not wish to answer any particular question or questions, they are free to decline.
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- 4. As a participant of the discussion, my child will not discuss or divulge information shared by others in the group or the researcher outside of this group.
- 5. I agree that the data collected from my child will possibly be used in future research.
- 6. I agree to permit my child to take part in the above research project.

[Redacted]

Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

29.08.2017
Date

Naeelah Kamaldien
Signature



Name of person taking consent Date
(if different from lead researcher)

Signature

[Signature]

N. Lawrence

Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

Copies: All participants will receive a copy of the signed and dated version of the consent form and information sheet for themselves. A copy of this will be filed and kept in a secure location for research purposes only.

Researcher:
[Signature]

Supervisor:
[Signature]

HOD:
[Signature]



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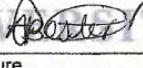


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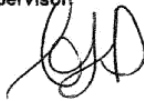
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UWC Supervisor: Dr Courtney Davids

Contact details: codavids@uwc.ac.za

Dean: Prof DJ Brown, djbrown@uwc.ac.za
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Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

Please initial box

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Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

29/06/2018
Date

UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE
Signature

Name of person taking consent
(if different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:



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21 : 08 : 18
Date

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Signature

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Name of Participant (or legal representative)

26 June 2015
Date

[Signature]
Signature

[Redacted]
Name of person taking consent Date (If different from lead researcher)

26/06/15
Date

[Signature]
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Lead Researcher

Date

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[Redacted] 30/8/2018 [Signature]
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 Name of person taking consent Date (If different from lead researcher) Signature
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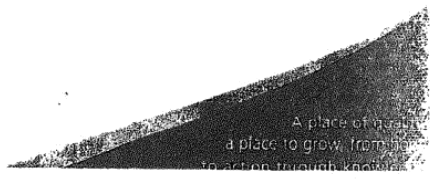
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Contact details: strawberryfieldsforever88@gmail.com 0611183527

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Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

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Name of Participant (or legal representative)

29.08.2018
Date

[Signature]
Signature

Name of person taking consent (if different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

Date

[Signature]
Signature

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Supervisor: *[Signature]*

HOD: *[Signature]*



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A place of quality
a place to grow, from hope
to action through knowledge



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Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

26 June 2018
Date

Signature

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Name of person taking consent
(if different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher

Date

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[Signature]

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to act on through



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Name of Participant (or legal representative)

29/06/2014

Date

[Signature]

Signature



Name of person taking consent Date (if different from lead researcher)

Signature

[Signature]

N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher

Date

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HOD: [Signature]



University of the Western Cape

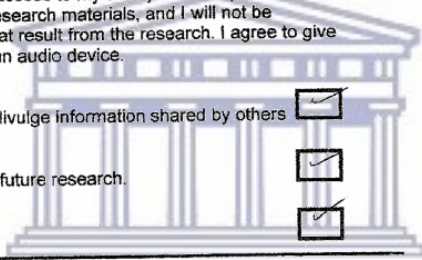
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Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

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Name of Participant
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14.02.2018
Date

Soyeen
Signature
UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE

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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:



University of the Western Cape

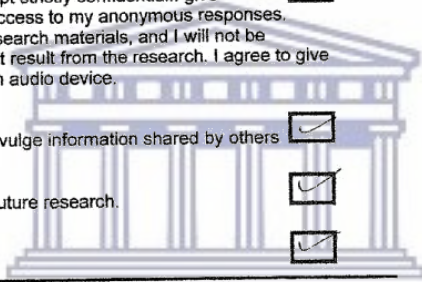
Consent Form

**Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis**

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

Please initial box

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- 6. I agree to take part in the above research project.



**Name of Participant
(or legal representative)**

14/02/2015
Date

[Signature]
Signature

**Name of person taking consent
(if different from lead researcher)**

Date

[Signature]
Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

Date

[Signature]
Signature

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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:



University of the Western Cape

Consent Form

Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

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[Redacted]

Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

15-02-18
Date

Signature

[Redacted]

Name of person taking consent
(If different from lead researcher)

15-02-2018
Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher

Supervisor

HOD:



Consent Form

**Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis**

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

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Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

15 FEBRUARY 2018 _____
Date Signature

Name of person taking consent Date
(if different from lead researcher)

15 FEBRUARY 2018 _____
Date Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher
(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

Date Signature

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Researcher:

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Consent Form

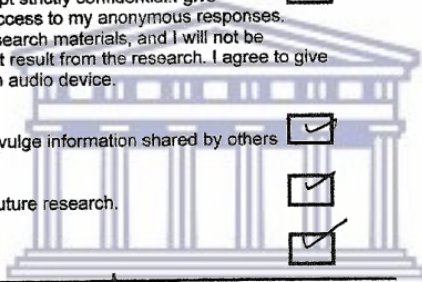
University of the Western Cape

**Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis**

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

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Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

15/02/2018
Date

Signature
UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Name of person taking consent Date
(if different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

Date

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University of the Western Cape

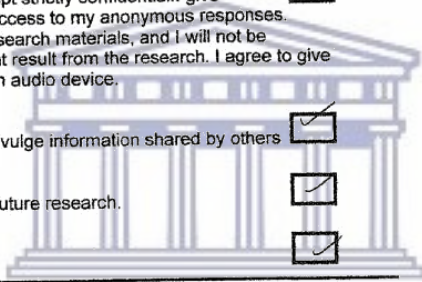
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Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis**

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

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Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

13 FEBRUARY 2018
Date Signature

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Name of person taking consent Date
(if different from lead researcher)

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher Date
(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

Signature

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Supervisor:

HOD:



University of the Western Cape

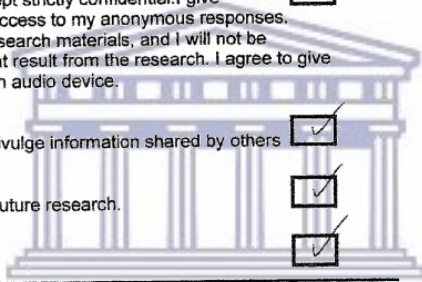
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Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

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[Redacted] 15/02/2018 [Signature]
 Name of Participant (or legal representative) Date Signature
[Signature] 15/02/2018 R. Prinsloo
 Name of person taking consent Date Signature
 (If different from lead researcher)
N. LAWRENCE _____ [Signature]
 Lead Researcher Date Signature
 (To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher:

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HOD:



University of the Western Cape

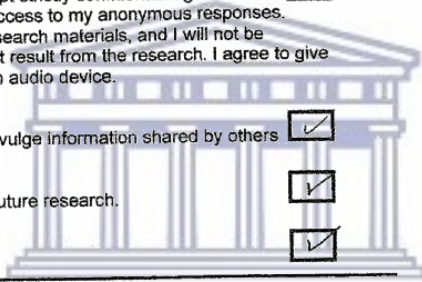
Consent Form

**Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis**

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

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Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

14 Feb 2016
Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent
(if different from lead researcher)

2018 02 14
Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

14 Feb 2018
Date

Signature

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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:



University of the Western Cape

Consent Form

Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

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Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

15.00.2018
Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent
(If different from lead researcher)

15.00.2018
Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

Date

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University of the Western Cape

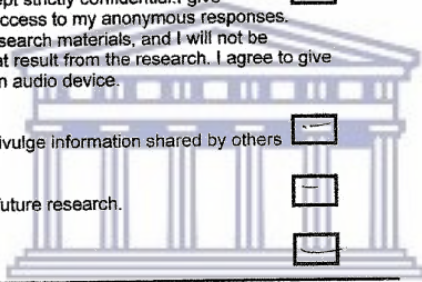
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Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis**

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

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Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

14-02-2018 _____
Date Signature

Name of person taking consent
(if different from lead researcher)

14-02-2018 _____
Date Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher
(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

Date Signature

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Supervisor:

HOD:



University of the Western Cape

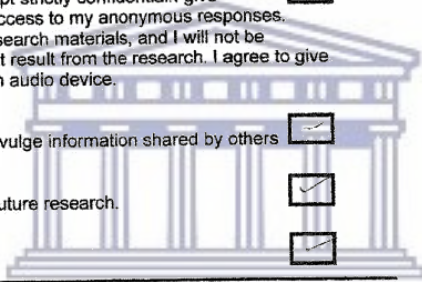
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Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis**

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

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[Redacted]

Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

14/02/2013
Date

M Williamson
Signature

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

N. LAWRENCE
Name of person taking consent Date
(If different from lead researcher)

Signature

[Signature]
Signature

Lead Researcher
(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

Date

Signature

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Researcher:

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University of the Western Cape

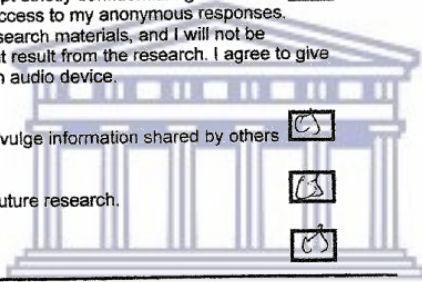
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Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

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Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

14 02 2018
Date

Signature
UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Name of person taking consent Date
(if different from lead researcher)

Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

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HOD:



Consent Form

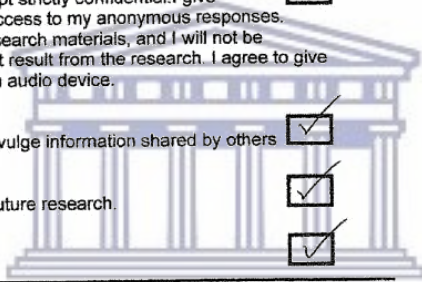
University of the Western Cape

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Name of Participant
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15/02/18
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Name of person taking consent
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15/02/18
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N. LAWRENCE
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Date

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University of the Western Cape

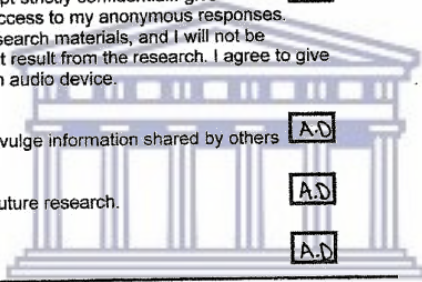
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**Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis**

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

Please initial box

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Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

13.02.2018
Date

N. Lawrence
Signature

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Name of person taking consent Date
(if different from lead researcher)

Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

Date Signature

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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

Please initial box

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
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- 5. I agree that the data collected from my child will possibly be used in future research.
- 6. I agree to permit my child to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

26/11/2018
Date

Naeelah Kamaldien
Signature

Name of person taking consent
(if different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. Lawrence
Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

Please initial box

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[Redacted]

Name of Participant (or legal representative)

26.11.2018
Date

[Signature]
Signature

Name of person taking consent (if different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

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Researcher:
[Signature]

Supervisor:
[Signature]

HOD:
[Signature]



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeeliah Kamaldien (2967264)

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- 5. I agree that the data collected from my child will possibly be used in future research.
- 6. I agree to permit my child to take part in the above research project.

[Redacted Name]

Name of Participant (or legal representative)

26.11.18
Date

[Signature]
Signature

Name of person taking consent (if different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher

Date

[Signature]
Signature

(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

Copies: All participants will receive a copy of the signed and dated version of the consent form and information sheet for themselves. A copy of this will be filed and kept in a secure location for research purposes only.

Researcher: [Signature]

Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

Please initial box

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
- 2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should they not wish to answer any particular question or questions, they are free to decline.
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Name of Participant (or legal representative)

26/11/2018 Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent (if different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

Lead Researcher (To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

Date

Signature

Copies: All participants will receive a copy of the signed and dated version of the consent form and information sheet for themselves. A copy of this will be filed and kept in a secure location for research purposes only.

Researcher: [Signature]

Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

Please initial box

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- 6. I agree to permit my child to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant (or legal representative)

Date 13/09/2018

Signature

Name of person taking consent (If different from lead researcher)

Date 14/09/2018

Signature

Lead Researcher N. Kamaldien

Date

Signature

Copies: All participants will receive a copy of the signed and dated version of the consent form and information sheet for themselves. A copy of this will be filed and kept in a secure location for research purposes only.

Researcher: [Signature]

Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



Assent Form – Focus Group Discussions


University of the Western Cape

Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence
Supervisor: Dr Courtney Davids

Please initial box

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4. As a participant of the discussion, I will not discuss or divulge information shared by others in the group or the researcher outside of this group.
5. I agree that the data collected from me may be used in future research.
6. I agree to take part in the above research project.


Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

15/02/2018
Date


Signature

Name of person taking consent Date
(If different from lead researcher)

Signature


N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

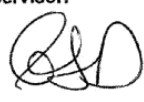
Date
(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

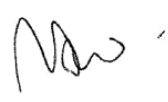


Signature

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Researcher:


Supervisor:


HOD:




Assent Form – Focus Group Discussions

University of the Western Cape

Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence
Supervisor: Dr Courtney Davids

Please initial box

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- I agree that the data collected from me may be used in future research.
- I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

15 FEBRUARY 2018

Date Signature

Name of person taking consent Date
(If different from lead researcher)

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher
(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

Date Signature

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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:



University of the Western Cape

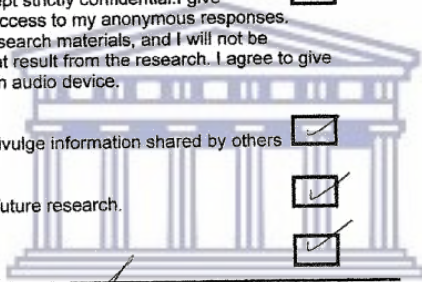
Consent Form

**Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis**

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

Please initial box

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- 6. I agree to take part in the above research project.



[Redacted Name]

Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

14/12/2013
Date

Signature

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Name of person taking consent Date
(if different from lead researcher)

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

Please initial box

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- 5. I agree that the data collected from my child will possibly be used in future research.
- 6. I agree to permit my child to take part in the above research project.

[Redacted] 26 November 2018 *(Naeelah)*
 Name of Participant Date Signature
 (or legal representative)

_____ _____ _____
 Name of person taking consent Date Signature
 (If different from lead researcher)

N. LAURENCE _____ _____
 Lead Researcher Date Signature
 (To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape


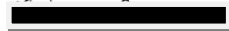
MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

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- 6. I agree to permit my child to take part in the above research project.

[Handwritten initials in boxes]

	<u>26/11/2018</u>	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
Name of Participant (or legal representative)	Date	Signature
	<u>26/11/2018</u>	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
Name of person taking consent (if different from lead researcher)	Date	Signature
<u>N. LAWRENCE</u>		<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
Lead Researcher (To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)	Date	Signature

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Researcher: *[Signature]*

Supervisor: *[Signature]*

HOD: *[Signature]*



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

Please initial box

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[Redacted Name]

26.11.18
Date

[Signature]
Signature

Name of person taking consent
(If different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

Date

[Signature]
Signature

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Researcher:
[Signature]

Supervisor:
[Signature]

HOD:
[Signature]



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

Please initial box

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- 6. I agree to permit my child to take part in the above research project. JD

[Redacted]

Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

26.11.2018
Date

E. Dixon
Signature

Name of person taking consent
(If different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. Lawrence

NO
Signature

Lead Researcher

Date

(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher:
[Signature]

Supervisor:
[Signature]

HOD:
[Signature]



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

Please initial box

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[Redacted Name]

Name of Participant (or legal representative)

26/11/2018

Date

[Signature]

Signature

Name of person taking consent (if different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher: [Signature]

Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

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[Redacted]

Name of Participant (or legal representative)

26/11/2018
Date

[Signature]
Signature

Name of person taking consent (if different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher (To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

Date

[Signature]
Signature

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Researcher: [Signature]

Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeeliah Kamaldien (2967264)

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[Redacted Name]

Name of Participant (or legal representative)

26/11/2018

Date

N. Mentfor

Signature

Name of person taking consent (If different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

[Signature]

Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher: [Signature]

Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

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Name of Participant (or legal representative)

26-11-2018
Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent (If different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

Date

Signature

Lead Researcher (To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:



Consent Form

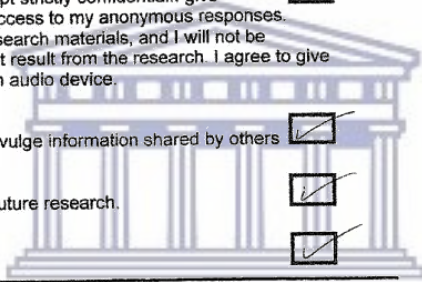
University of the Western Cape

**Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis**

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

Please initial box

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Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

14/02/2018
Date

Naeelah Lawrence
Signature

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Name of person taking consent Date
(if different from lead researcher)

Signature

N. Lawrence
Lead Researcher

Date

N. Lawrence
Signature

(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:



Consent Form

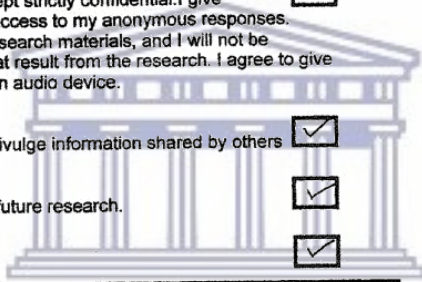
University of the Western Cape

Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

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[Redacted] 14/02/2018 C. B. Mac
 Name of Participant Date Signature
 (or legal representative)

[Redacted] 14.02.18 [Signature]
 Name of person taking consent Date Signature
 (If different from lead researcher)

N. LAWRENCE _____
 Lead Researcher Date Signature
 (To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:



Consent Form


University of the Western Cape


MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.


Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

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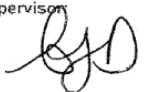
[Redacted] 26.11.18 
 Name of Participant Date Signature
 (or legal representative)


Name of person taking consent Date Signature
 (if different from lead researcher) 26.11.18 

[Redacted] ~~26.11.18~~ 
 Lead Researcher Date Signature
 (To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher:


Supervisor:


HOD:




Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeelah Kamaldien (2967264)

Please initial box

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[Redacted]

Name of Participant (or legal representative)

26.11.2018
Date

Naeelah Kamaldien
Signature

Name of person taking consent (If different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher:
Naeelah Kamaldien

Supervisor:
[Signature]

HOD:
[Signature]



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University of the Western Cape

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26/11/18 Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent (If different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

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Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



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[Redacted Name]

Name of Participant (or legal representative)

26/11/2019
Date

[Signature]
Signature

Name of person taking consent (if different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher (To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

Date

Signature

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Researcher: [Signature]

Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



Consent Form

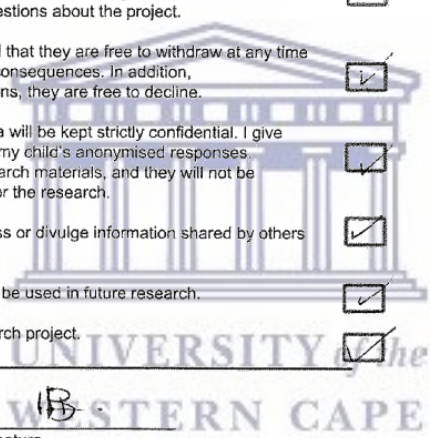
University of the Western Cape


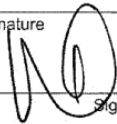
MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

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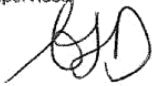
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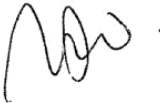


	26:11:18	IB
Name of Participant (or legal representative)	Date	Signature
Name of person taking consent (If different from lead researcher)		
		
Name: N. LAWRENCE		
Lead Researcher (To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)	Date	Signature

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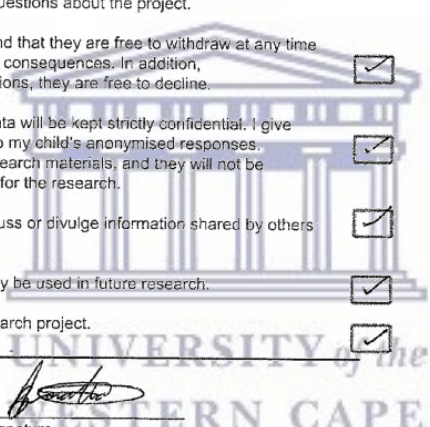
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UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE

[Redacted Name]

Name of Participant (or legal representative)

22/11/18

Date

[Signature]

Signature

22/11/18

Date

[Signature]

Signature

Name of person taking consent (If different from lead researcher)

N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher

Date

(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

[Signature]

Signature

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Researcher: [Signature]

Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



Assent Form – Focus Group Discussions

University of the Western Cape

Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence
Supervisor: Dr Courtney Davids

Please initial box

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Name of Participant (or legal representative)

15.02.18 Date Signature

Name of person taking consent (If different from lead researcher)

15-02-2018 Date Signature

N. LAWRENCE Lead Researcher

Date Signature

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Researcher: [Signature]

Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



Assent Form – Focus Group Discussions

University of the Western Cape

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Date

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Lead Researcher

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Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



Assent Form – Focus Group Discussions

University of the Western Cape

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University of the Western Cape

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[REDACTED] 14.02.2018 Green
 Name of Participant (or legal representative) Date Signature

N. LAWRENCE _____
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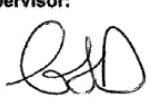
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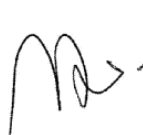
Researcher:



Supervisor:



HOD:





Assent Form – Focus Group Discussions

University of the Western Cape

Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence
Supervisor: Dr Courtney Davids

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Date

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Name of person taking consent (if different from lead researcher)

15/02/18
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N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

Date

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Researcher: [Signature]

Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



Assent Form – Focus Group Discussions

University of the Western Cape

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Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis

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Name of Participant (or legal representative)

14/02/2018
Date

C. Davids
Signature

Name of person taking consent (If different from lead researcher)

14-02-2018
Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

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Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



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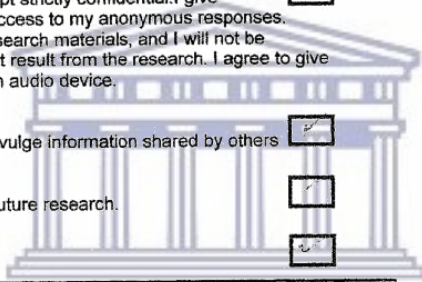
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Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis**

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

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Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

13/02/18
Date

Naeelah Lawrence
Signature
UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Name of person taking consent Date
(if different from lead researcher)

Signature

N. Lawrence
Lead Researcher

Date

Naeelah Lawrence
Signature

(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Supervisor:

HOD:



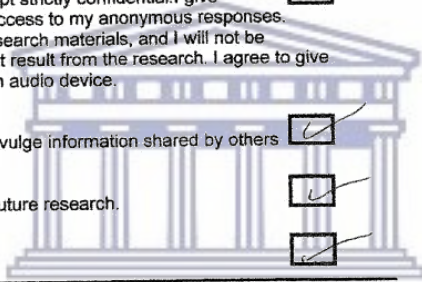
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Name of Participant (or legal representative)
Date: 14/02/18
Signature
Name of person taking consent Date
Signature
Lead Researcher N. LAWRENCE Date Signature

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Researcher: [Signature]

Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



University of the Western Cape

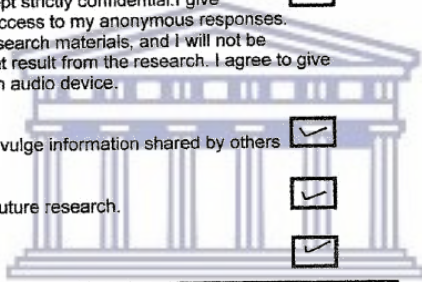
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Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

13/02/2018
Date

Gprabs
Signature

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Name of person taking consent Date
(If different from lead researcher)

Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

Date

[Signature]
Signature

(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher:
[Signature]

Supervisor:
[Signature]

HOD:
[Signature]



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

MA Full Thesis: An exploration of reader response to and social identification with Grade 12 prescribed poetry.

Researcher: Naeeliah Kamaldien (2967264)

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Name of Participant (or legal representative)

26/11/2018

Abnabans

Name of person taking consent (if different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

N. LAWRENCE

Date

Signature

Lead Researcher (To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher: [Signature]

Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



Assent Form – Focus Group Discussions

University of the Western Cape

Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence
Supervisor: Dr Courtney Davids

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Name of Participant
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13-02-18
Date

Signature

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Lead Researcher
(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Date

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University of the Western Cape

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Supervisor: Dr Courtney Davids

Please initial box

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences.
3. I understand that my responses and personal data will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymous responses.
4. As a participant of the discussion, I will not discuss or divulge information shared by others in the group or the researcher outside of this group.
5. I agree that the data collected from me may be used in future research.
6. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant (or legal representative)

14/02/2018
Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent Date (if different from lead researcher)

Signature

N. LAWRENCE
Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

Copies: All participants will receive a copy of the signed and dated version of the consent form and information sheet for themselves. A copy of this will be filed and kept in a secure location for research purposes only.

Researcher: [Signature]

Supervisor: [Signature]

HOD: [Signature]



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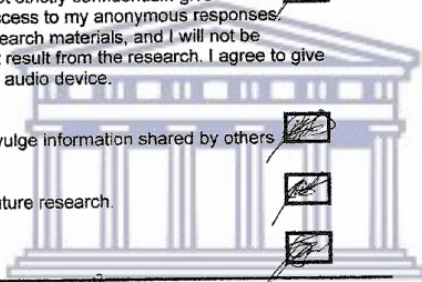
Consent Form

Title: An Exploration of Reader Response to and Social Identification with Grade 12 Prescribed Poetry.
Research Project: Masters of Arts Full Thesis

Researcher: Naeelah Lawrence

Please initial box

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3. I understand my responses and personal data will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymous responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the reports or publications that result from the research. I agree to give consent for the researcher to record my answers with an audio device.
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(or legal representative)

14/02/2018
Date

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(If different from lead researcher)

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N. LAWRENCE

Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:



University of the Western Cape

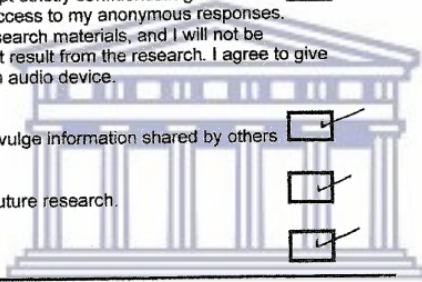
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(or legal representative)

Date Signature

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Lead Researcher
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Researcher:

Supervisor:

HOD:

READER RESPONSE ENGAGEMENT WITH PRESCRIBED POETRY:

Sample questions 1

What do you think the poem is about?

What are the main themes?

Can you identify with the poem?

Does the poem make you think of :

- school
- community
- relationships
- religion
- social ills



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READER RESPONSE ENGAGEMENT WITH PRESCRIBED POETRY:

Sample questions 2

Please write as much as you can, explain your points in detail.

Please make reference to your own experiences, memories, attitudes, beliefs, relationships, struggle, communities

1. What do you think this poem is about?
2. Can you identify the major themes or topics that occur in the poem and why do you think so?

3. Does this poem make you think of the following and explain your answer in detail

3.1 school

3.2 family

3.3 friends/relationships

3.4 your community where you live

3.5 Mitchells Plain

3.6 gangsterism

3.7 poverty

3.8 crime

3.9 substance abuse

3.10 religion



3.11 your own belief system

3.12 your childhood

3.13 Past memories or experiences

3.14 What other feelings/memories/attitudes or experiences does this poem make you think of? Add anything else that you wish to add.



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LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. The poem is about the garden of love and the writer later discovers that the garden of love is a graveyard.
2. The themes are about love and sadness. "Priests in black gowns were walking their rounds."
3. Yes "where I used to play on the green, this could mean a childhood memory (sic)
4. This poem makes me think about family, because it says Priests in black gowns were walking their rounds. It reminds me of the passing of my grandma and how so many Priest (sic) were at her funeral.

It also reminds me of the sweet little boy who never made it to high school because he was in a (sic) accident the previous day and his (sic) properly living among (sic) the angels in a garden of love.

Religion based (sic) a chapel could probably be a Church my religion as a Christian. (sic)

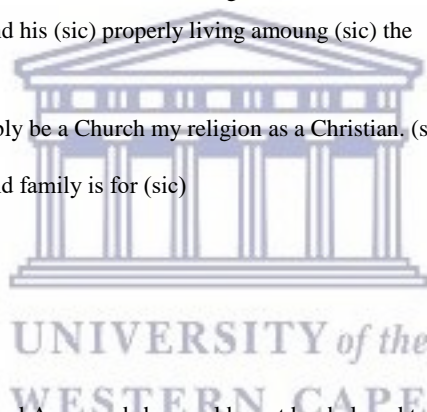
My joys and desires that's what friends and family is for (sic)

Poem: Vultures

1. The poem is about good and evil

Poem: Remember

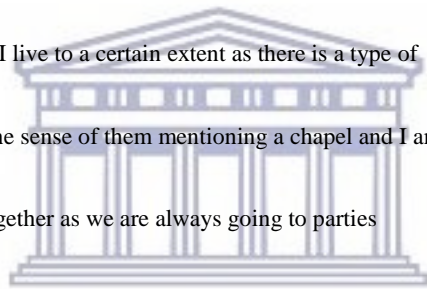
- 1) The poem is about a beloved who passed Away and she would want her beloved to remember her (sic)
- 2) The theme silent land- Heaven a place (sic) of piece/peace when you can no more hold me by the hand- she's gone and he has nothing left to hold on.
- 3) Yes I could relate to the poem characters/themes. The beloved wants to be remembered, yet she gives up and wants him to not remember her anymore.
- 4) The poem makes me think about Relationships and this (sic) relationship the gay or beloved is very controlling (sic)



LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. The poem is about someone that (sic) used to go to a garden in their youth, but now when they returned at their current age, this place was transformed into a cemetery of some sort.
2. The theme in this poem would be a distant memory as the place he once visited is no longer what it used to be.
3. I can indeed relate to this as I can clearly picture everything that is being mentioned in the poem.
4. - This poem does not easily make me think of school.
-This poem makes me think of family and it gives a (sic) image of myself with my family at a park.
- This poem reminds me of where I live to a certain extent as there is a type of "school" near to me.
-It makes me think of religion in the sense of them mentioning a chapel and I am a religious person
-It relates to culture and friends together as we are always going to parties together.



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Poem: Remember

1. This poem is about someone who might be leaving the earth and is telling his/her lover not to forget him/her.

Poem: Vultures

1. This poem is about a serial killer who stores dead bodies.
2. Death
3. No I can't
4. Religion- no relationship with god
5. Friends-
6. School-
7. Family-

8. Culture-

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love:

1. I think the poem is about someone who is experiencing something that he/she has never experienced before for e.g. the chapel their (sic) was built in the midst
2. Death
3. Love
4. Yes I think I can because I have experienced something similar to this where I have been somewhere but haven't really taken notice of the things around me and only realise (sic) as a newer age that here is another building.
5. It does make me that of school because I would walk pass (sic) classes and didn't even notice the music studio until a later stage. I live in Tafelsig and we were reminded of many things where I'm from so we don't really have something new that's done.
6. It reminds me of family because I remember being in grade 6 when my sister passed away and it was sad because we didn't have any communication with each other, she was on her own. And I was staying with my parents and today I wish we could have had something better before she passed.



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Poem: Vultures

I think this poem is about miserable light and people who are conned messengers. There is (sic)

Poem: Remember

1. This poem is about a woman who asks her husband/boyfriend to remember her when she's gone, when he can no more longer (sic) hold her by the hand and are she is telling him to rather forget her and smile, than to be sad while remembering her.
2. Sad.
Depressing

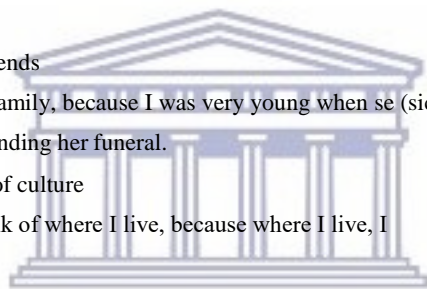
3. Yes because at some point

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. It's about someone visiting an old place, where he once played on the green. When he visited again the place looked different, there was a chapel built.
2. He went to the garden of love, but it was filled with graves. I think it is a cemetery now.
3. Yes, can relate to the themes, because I've been several times in cemeteries.
4. School- it doesn't make me think of school

Religion- yes it does make me think of my religion, because sometimes I wonder where will I go after I die.

- No it doesn't make me think of my friends
- Yes it does make me think about my family, because I was very young when se (sic) passed away. I can still remember attending her funeral.
- Culture- no it doesn't make me think of culture
- Where I live- not it doesn't let me think of where I live, because where I live, I experience a different environment.



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Poem: Vultures

1. The poem is about love with a family. The vultures eats (sic) the dead body as a family.
2. This poem takes place mostly in nature, like in the trees.
3. Yes, because my family does everything together as well. And we love each other

Poem: Remember

1. The writer tells her lover, to remember he, (sic) when she is gone.
2. The writer is scared, her lover would forget her. And she want (sic) He/she to remember her.

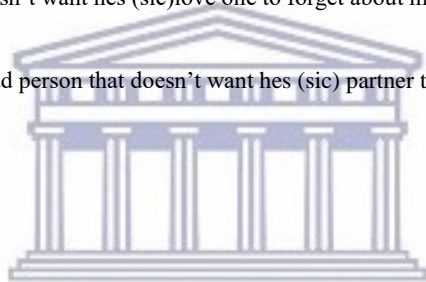
LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. This poem is about love and about something that they wont (sic) forget that happened to them.
2. The theme of this poem is about love and full of joy.
3. No, I cant (sic) relate to the poem and its characters
4. The poem reallt (sic) make me think about a religion and most all (sic) the culture and the joy of this poem but it does not relate to anything about my school. There is not much love and memories on this. This poem mostly remind (sic) me on religion miss.

Poem: Remember

1. It's about some one (sic) that (sic) doesn't want hes (sic)love one to forget about him while he's not around.
2. This theme of this poem is about a dead person that doesn't want hes (sic) partner to forget about him/her
3. Yes
4. No this poem doesn't (sic)



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Poem: Vultures

1. It is about a miserable person (sic) fate of god and about a Places (sic) where there are lot of dead bodies.
2. Miserable, no love
Fate of God

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. This poem is based on a guy who visits this old garden he used to go to when he was a kid. Once he steps inside, where the green field used to be when he was a kid was (sic) now owned by a chapel. The beautiful flowers that used to grow there were now tombstones that showed where the graves were.
2. The theme of this poem is based on the love he used to have for this garden in his childhood.

3. The poem relates to my days as a six year old too where I used to play in this park which had slides, swings, merry-go-rounds and all sores (sic) of play areas. Nowadays the park has been ruined by gangsters and the community dumping their litter where the swings used to hang.
4. In school their (sic) has been a change in the toilets which relates to the change of the garden. But at the school they have made the toilets to look brand new, (sic) in the poem they also change the garden to look like something new.

-The poem reminds me of my grandfather who passed away a few years back. Every year my family and I would go visit his tomb-stone just to pray for him in the afterlife.

Poem: Remember

It is about this lady who does not want her husband to forget her once she dies or passes away

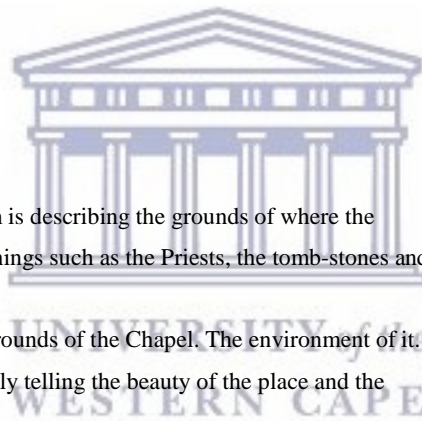
LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. This person who has written this poem is describing the grounds of where the Chapel/Church is And he sees many things such as the Priests, the tomb-stones and the sweet flowers.
2. The theme of this poem is about the grounds of the Chapel. The environment of it.
3. Yes I can relate. This person is basically telling the beauty of the place and the environment.
4. School- It reminds me of primary school when children used to play on the green grass when it was play time.

Religion- it reminds me of Sunday's of (sic) attending the services and the Gardens too I see the flowers by the entrance of the Church. And seeing the priests.

Friends- somehow it reminds me of a wedding. We attend our friend's/family's wedding and when we take photo's (sic) by the garden.



Family- usually with family it's always funerals and that's where (sic) the tomb-stones come in.

Culture- it's kind of the same as religion I think.

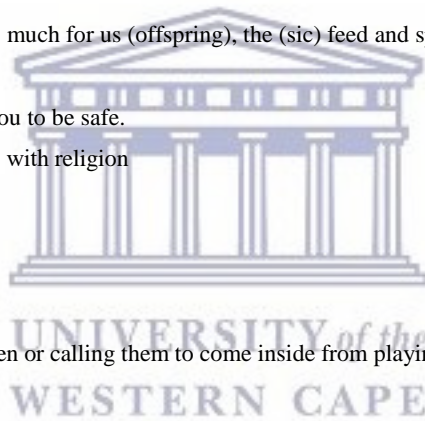
Where you live- the sweet flowers remind me of home, because my mother adores flowers and she has a garden as well. (sic)

Poem: Vultures

1. I think it's a nice way of comparing the vultures life (sic) to a (sic) humans.
2. Parent-hood (sic)
3. I think I can because our parents do so much for us (offspring), the (sic) feed and spoil us while we are young.
4. School- your parents always wanted you to be safe.
 - Religion- I don't think it go (sic) to do with religion
 - Friends- always stick together
 - Family- Again, wanting us to be safe

-Culture- not really

Where you live- Parents be looking for children or calling them to come inside from playing outside.



Poem: Remember

1. This poem is about the person who wrote it (Christina Rossetti) and she is deperately (sic) wanted (sic) to be remembered in the first 12 lines by her lover but in the last 2 lines she wants her lover to forget her and move on and to (sic) be happy.
2. Yes when losing your loved one.
3. Love, sadness & death

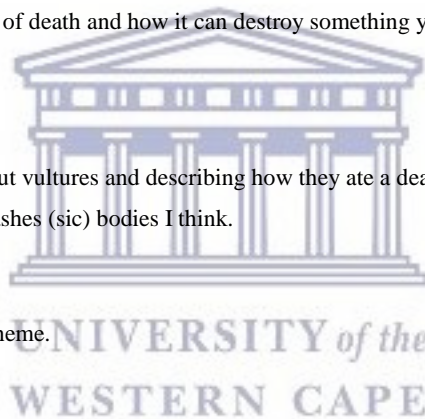
LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. I think its (sic) about a garden called the Garden of Love where the poet played in his childhood, which was turned into a graveyard. The second that came into my head as I read the last stanza was that maybe many people died in the Garden of Love.
2. Childhood memories which was destroyed by the chapel being built and the tombstones
3. Yes I can relate about losing a place which I had loved as a 'child'. My aunty's house where the whole family would gather but the house was sold.
4. It does not make me think of my school, family, religion, friends, culture nor where I live but it does remind me of death and how it can destroy something you love dearly.

Poem: Vultures

1. At the begin (sic) Chinua is talking about vultures and describing how they ate a dead body. Then he talks a Commandant who ashes (sic) bodies I think.
2. Evil and Death
3. No I cannot relate to the characters or theme.
4. The cruelty of life and people.



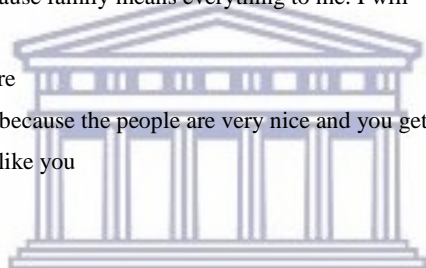
Poem: Remember

1. The poet knows she is going to die and wants her beloved to remember her. For when she is death (sic) it will be to (sic) late to do anything Later in the poem the poet maybe realise (sic) that she is being selfish for wanting her beloved to remember everyday for it will cause pain. She also says if her beloved remembers her she hopes it is good memories.
2. Desperation and then acceptance.
3. I cannot relate to this poem.
4. It does not make me think of anything.

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. The poem for me is about some type of tower that is suppose (sic) to be all beautiful but actually it is not because of the graves and priests.
2. The theme is love but also very sad as well.
3. Yes, because I also tell (sic) like I am in love or loved by someone but then memories would come back and I will be sad again.
4. -Does not make me think of school
-Doesn't make me think of my religion
- Makes me think of my friends because some can be very loving and others can be very nasty at times.
- It does let me think of family because family means everything to me. I will always put my family first
-Does not let me think of my culture
-It makes me think of where I live because the people are very nice and you get the people that (sic) does (sic) not like you



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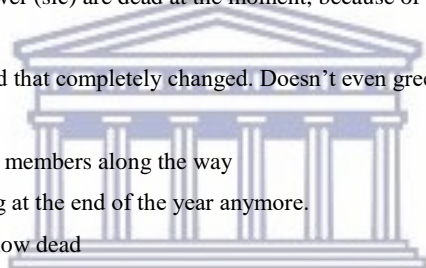
Poem: Vultures

1. The poem is about death because it is speaking about dead bodies.
2. The theme is sadness
3. Yes because there was (sic) people that (sic) died in my family and (sic) that I cared about and loved.
4. School- Yes many kids died here by the school but I don't know them.
Religion- does not make me think of religion
Friends- my friend's father died and I was very grateful to her family- never had someone close to me that died.
Culture- does not let me think or religion
Where I live- many people died in my area who I care about

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. It is about the speaker going to a place where he had played when he was younger, but when he gets to the place he finds that it had completely changed.
2. The theme is about how things change after a time
3. Yes I can, when I walk into the street I grew up in, I used to see all my friends enjoying themselves outside. Nowadays the road is completely dead.
4. The poem does relate to my school – it has changed a lot over the past couple of years.
 - Well at my church the flower (sic) are dead at the moment, because of the water crisis.
 - I've had a childhood friend that completely changed. Doesn't even greet anymore.
 - We have lost a few family members along the way
 - We don't even go camping at the end of the year anymore.
 - The road I grew up in is now dead



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Poem: Vultures

1. I think someone's dad died
2. Death in a strange way
3. I can't relate because my dad is still alive.
4. I know someone on (sic) school whose dad died.

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. I think this poem is about a girl/boy who was little who used to play in the forest and now that they much bigger the (sic) see that a Christian building was build (sic) on the grounds they used to play, but when they arrived the doors of the chapel were shut and a chapel's doors are suppose (sic) to be open at all times and when the person turned there were no flowers it was filled with graves.

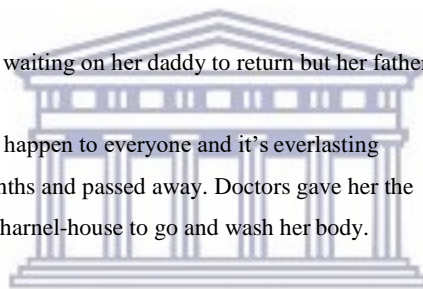
For me its (sic) almost like a childhood love that has been turned into graves and tomb stones it's giving me a feeling that this Childhood love has totally died out.

2. Priests were suppose (sic) to be dressed in white clothes and be busy praying and not be walking around and the chapel's doors were suppose (sic) to be open.

3. This poem makes me think of myself because sometimes in live (sic) I will be happy cheerful (sic) all those energetic words and the next moment I would be like totally dead not taking not of anything then I would almost be like a dead person.

Poem: Vultures

1. I think this poem is about what basically happens where (sic) dead bodies are taken to once they are dead.
2. Dead people and someone who's (sic) waiting on her daddy to return but her father died
3. That dead (sic) is something that must happen to everyone and it's everlasting
4. To my family member she was 11 months and passed away. Doctors gave her the wrong injection. We had to go to the charnel-house to go and wash her body.



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Poem: Remember

1. The poem is written to a loved one that needs to be remembered.
2. The theme in this poem is mostly about love, she want the person to forget about her but yet telling (sic) him to remember her.
3. I can't relate.
4. I can't really relate to this poem.

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. A chapel is being built on the grounds of the Garden of love. In my opinion it basically means that the love has died because of the tombstones that are usually found in graveyards.
2. Heart-break (sic) , sad
3. Yes, whenever I find something or someone that I like there is also someone that takes it away from me

4. It doesn't let me think of school.

-Yes, I was very close to some of my family members but then they passed away or just disappeared.

-It has nothing to do with religion nor culture.

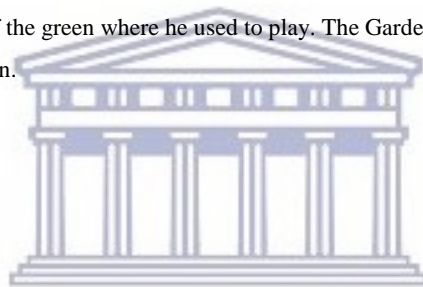
- Yes, this poem let's (sic) me think of my friends and the things we loved doing but we all grew out of it.

-Yes, I do think a lot about how things used to be in my community and my house but things have changed.

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

The Chapel was built on the middle of the green where he used to play. The Garden of Love reminds us of the Garden of Eden.



Poem: Vultures

1. About vultures hunting for food

3. Sad, happy

4. Yes, there are vultures on the school always looking for food.

5. -In my household, my uncle is a vulture, he's always looking for food and never provides or (sic) others.



Poem: Remember

1. The poet is on the verge of death but she wants her lover to Remember her when she's gone, but he shouldn't be alone he's (sic) entire life.

LEARNER RESPONSE

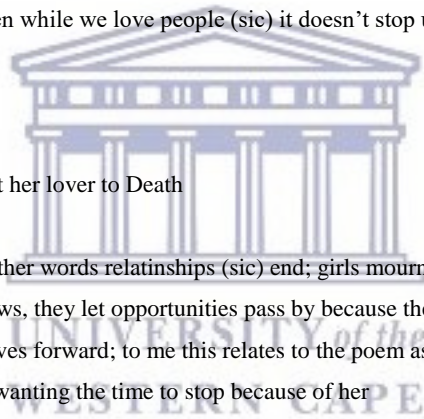
Poem: Vultures

1. In complete honesty I am not exactly certain what this poem is about but there are continuous references to evil and also continuous reference to people we love; like 8 'mate', line 49 'kindred' and also the repetition of the word 'love'.

2. Death, the word 'corpse' and hollowed remnant suggest this.
- 3.1 I'd say maybe. I guess the world we live in is a strange one; evil things happen in places we ought to feel safe in; corruption dominates unfortunately and even while I'll never admit it to others I sorta kinda (sic) love people at my school. To me the Poem relates to evil and love and I find both of these things at school.
- 3.2 Mahn (sic) family, I have a very bleak understanding of the poem but like I said I think its (sic) about how love and evil intertwines with each other and im (sic) certain that this relates to families and it rings true for most if not all families. We have daughters being raped by their fathers; families abandoning each other. The people we love the most are our families and so they have the ability to destroy us the most and since im (sic) sure everybody knows, most people succumb to evil and even while we love people (sic) it doesn't stop us from hurting them.

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. A girl/woman who had just lost her lover to Death
2. Love and Death
- 3.1 Definitely; when love dies in other words relationships (sic) end; girls mourn they wallow in their own sorrows, they let opportunities pass by because they are too weak to propel themselves forward; to me this relates to the poem as I feel, the speaker is kinda (sic) wanting the time to stop because of her heartache; similarly girls think the world stops when their hearts gets (sic) broken and so they kinda (sic) just sit around and do nothing but mope.
- 3.2 Death is inevitable and family is a luxury most are afforded. People die (sic) it's the way of the universe; this poem makes me think of what it would be like to lose my mother who is my North, my South, my East and West.
- 3.3 It makes me think of relationships yes. I try to stray away from letting myself get too close to anybody because I feel like I would be like this speaker; someone who loves too much; someone who loves violently; who would feel like the greatest tragedy had afflicted me; when they are no longer there; it makes me think of the kind of relationships I might've had, had it not been of my fear of falling to my own demise because of the people I have chosen to love.



3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 No

3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

3.13 Maybe. I, while I try to keep my distance not (sic) to get close enough to get hurt; I am flawed; so I stooped to folly (sic); let myself love someone and the person didn't die but the person left and it felt hellish; I wallowed in my own sorrow, let opportunities slip through my nervous swetty (sic) fingers and I was destroyed because "I thought that love would last forever."



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LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Vultures

1. I think this poem is about a father who has to provide for his family. His job is not very glamorous but he does it because he needs to provide for his family. In line 26, charnel house is mentioned, we can now conclude that his father is a killer.

2. Love, care and death

3.1 No

3.2 Yes because he comes home his (sic) feeds his offspring after a day of work

3.3 Yes, this perfect relationship with his child is special as he makes a stop at a sweet shop to pick up some chocolate for his child.

3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 Yes, this is a typical example of a gangster: During the day they kill and at night they return to their family.

3.7 Yes, this man is probably really struggling which is why he does this, to provide for his family.

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. This (sic) basically about a woman who loves her husband and she is very sad about it.

2. love, death

3.1 No

3.2 No

3.3 Yes, the relationship with her husband

3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 No

3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No



3.13 No

3.14 I feel for this woman as she has lost her soulmate.

Poem: A Hard Frost

1. I think this poem is about the change of season, basically everything changes

2. change

3.1 No

3.2 No

3.3 No

3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 No

3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

3.13 Yes, I have had a past experience whereby the change of season had completely changed my old look on life.

3.14 Change is good and I would always welcome change in any which way.

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Vultures

1. I think poem is about a daughter and her father, spending (sic) time together. Like (sic) trying to get that love between them (sic) because it seem (sic) that in the poem she loss (sic)



of hope or courage like She (sic) needed to spent (sic) more time with her father, to get his love and for him to know she here (sic) by him.

2. Love, caring. I think so because in the poem they show strange love for each other, and he cares about her, he will stop at the wayside sweet-shop to pick up some chocolate for her. And She waiting (sic) at home for daddy's return She wants him to come safe home and see that he comes home.

3.3 This poem makes me think about relationships between a father and daughter that (sic) relationship that love you must have with a father or mother actually (sic) you must have it with both parents. And this poem makes me think about that love and showing you care about that person in your life, showing you are grateful (sic) for having them in your life.

3. By all other questions No

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. I think this poem is about a lady that (sic) lost her husband, her true love, her friend, her everything. And she is very sad and hereing (sic) his death. And in this poem she is saying how she feels inside her heart.

2. Sadness and love. In the poem you can see by the words how she is feeling, what mood she has, and she saying (sic) what he meant to her, and how she inlove (sic) with him and how heartbroken she is from his death.

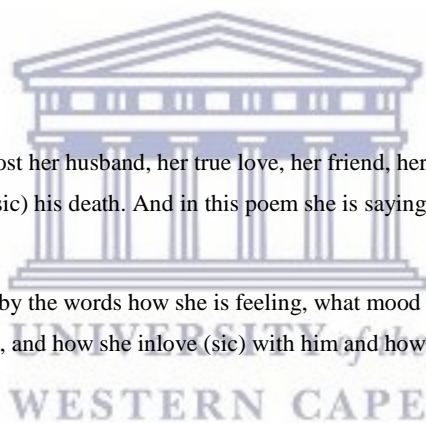
3.3 This poem makes me think of friends/relationships. That love in a relationship is when loosing (sic) a love one is very sad and heartbreaking. (sic) I know how that feels when loosing (sic) a loved one, it breaks you down and it makes you weak. When having a relationship is true and strong, it helps you with your feeling (sic) and it helps you how to (sic) deal with different people.

3. By all the other questions No

Poem: A Hard Frost

1. I think is poem is about the change in things like the wealth change.

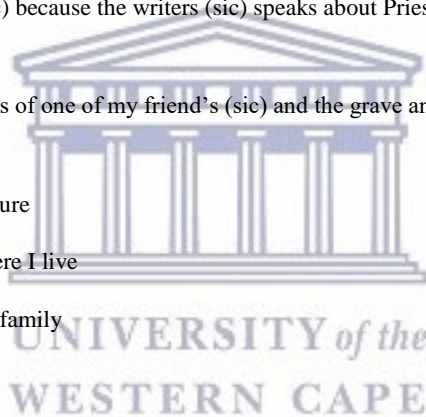
3.14 It makes me feel or have that memories (sic) about winter, how ice-cold it is in winter and not really having really (sic) things to keep you warm.



LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. I think the poem is about the garden of love that so many sweet flowers bore, that (sic) the garden is now a grave.
 2. The theme is Love of sweat (sic) flowers and the joys and desires that binds.
 3. Yes I can relate to the theme because I have a Love for flowers and nature and the green gardens.
 - 4.- The poem does not make me think about school.
- The poem makes me think about religion (sic) because the writers (sic) speaks about Priests in black gowns walking their rounds
 - The poem also makes me think about the loss of one of my friend's (sic) and the grave and tomb-stone
 - The poem does not make me think about culture
 - The poem does not make me think about where I live
 - The poem does neither make me think about family



Poem: Remember

1. The poem is about a girl that (sic) is scared that her beloved will forget her when she's gone

Poem: Vultures

1. I think this poem is about evil deeds of death and the decisions of humans where evil resides
- 3.1 No
 - 3.2 No

3.3 No

Poem: Felix Randal

1. I think this poem is about Hopkins that had an (sic) sickness which broke him and he died.

2. the (sic) major themes is the rythm (sic) and the rhym (sic) because Hopkins died of an illness and leading (sic) to death.

3. No

3.2 Yes, it does make me think about family because death is the one certainty in life and you should love your family and care for them and treat them right because you never know when their time comes and when the time comes you regret it sometimes and think why didnt (sic) I just care for this person/family or perhaps and you realise its (sic) too late now.

3.3 No

3.4 Yes makes me think of community because sometimes there are gangsterism and violence so its (sic) dangerous and people could hurt or something might happen to them if they go outside.

3.5 Mitchells Plain is a place where their (sic) are (sic) a lot of crime, gangsterism, poverty, diseases, sicknesses etc. So you are exposed to these (sic) everywhere you go you will see it

3.6 Gangsterism leads to gang violence and dangerousness where people might get hurt because gangsters doesn't (sic) care who they hurt as long as they hurt someone doesnt (sic) matter who it is because this might be a war between gangs etc

3.8 Yes, what this man is doing is clearly a critical offence

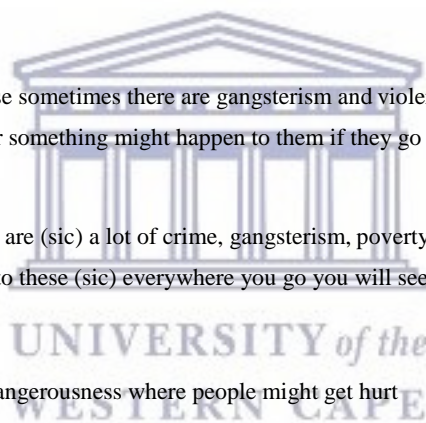
3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

3.13 No



3.14 It really saddens me, I personally have not ever experienced this. My parents have not been working for a while now and yet it has been tough, but I know for a fact that my father hasn't been on a killing spree to provide for me. It only makes me realize and grateful about what I love.

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. I think this poem is about a character who lost someone and is at the gates of a barial. (sic) This place used to be a joyful place but now it's just a place where people feels (sic) hurt and their hearts are filled with darkness.

2. The themes are love and losing family.

3. Yes I can. When I lost my grandmother and it was time for the funeral, I felt full of darkness and didn't even want to open my eyes

4. Religion- reminds me about how the pastar (sic) always speaks

Your school- nothing to do with my school

Friends- can shut you out of their life

Family- reminds me of my grandmothers (sic) death

Culture- nothing about culture

Where you live- it might have a lot to do with the place I stay because there is a lot of darkness.

Poem: Remember

1. A character is concerned (sic) about how people will remember him/her

2. Rememberance (sic)

3. Yes. I sometimes wonder how people will remember me when I die



LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. In my opinion, this poem is about someone losing the love of his life, we know that the person losing the loved one is a female because it clearly states there. She feels as if there is no hope, she gives up on life, she wants to be felt sorry for, and she wants everyone to mourn (sic) with her, she's trying to tell the reader that she'll never move on.

2. The Main theme is death, other themes (sic) are love, obsession, psychotic (sic)

3.1 No

3.2 Yes, the death of one's close friend or even mother or sibling

3.3 Yes, it could be the death of friendship, not losing (sic) the actual person, but the relationship you guys had.

3.4 Yes, it could be the death of children of mothers in the community

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 No

3.8 Yes, it could be crime causing funerals/death

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

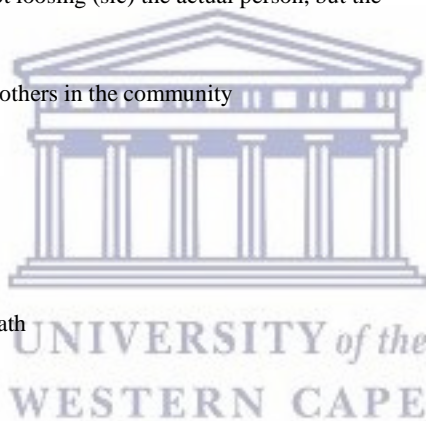
3.12 No

3.13 No

Poem: Vultures

1. I do not really understand this poem. But, this poem could be about crime and theft, maybe the poet uses the vultures as gangsters or thieves. The title of the poem could be describing how hungry or greedy people are for money a (sic) materialistic things.

2. No



3.1 No

3.2 No

3.3 Yes, because in line 24 the poet speaks about love, and that way friends/relationships are close related. (sic)

3.4 No

3.5 Yes it does, rape is a common crime in Mitchells Plain, and in the first paragraph in my opinion, the poet speaks about it

3.6 Yes, in line 13 the poet in my opinion is speaking about gangsterism

Poem: A Hard Frost

1. It could be about a storm, or a cold breeze that came across the town. In the first paragraph she could be speaking about how the cold breeze look (sic) away the warmth in her house/room and not her world, he could be using it as a metaphor

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Vultures

1. I think the poem is about abuse contrasted with love. I think it is about someone trying to take care of his own but inturn (sic) is harming others...

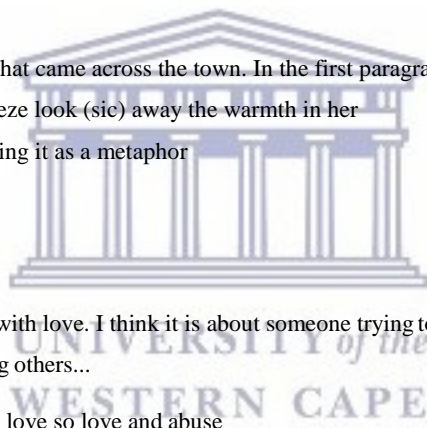
2. like (sic) I said in Q1 abuse contrasted with love so love and abuse

3.6 The poem makes me think about gangsterism eg. The (sic) gangsters in our community act out violence amongst one another symbolizing the abuse in the poem but at the same time address the elders in our community with great respect symbolizing the love of the poem

Poem: A Hard Frost

1. I think this poem is about a reality which was sort of twisted a bit by a source and for a while it seemed like a dream but this was only for a while then after that reality claimed it (sic) rightful position again.

2. I think the theme could be reality vs appearance



3. 1 It seems like a place of study but had a lot of hidden agendas eg. at this institution of study we form bonds and relationships with our teacher and friends, they become dear to us and we regard them as one of our own.

3.2 Many families appear to be whole and perfect but in actual fact (sic) are very much broken and torn apart

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. I think this poem is about love and death. I think in this poem there is an individual who has lost her loved one and along with her loved she has lost her hope and is left in a state of despair. I also think that this individual is angry (sic) of his/her loved one as she (sic) if I look at the tone of the last stanza where she put out every one...like she is making a commandment

2. The major themes are love, death and mourning

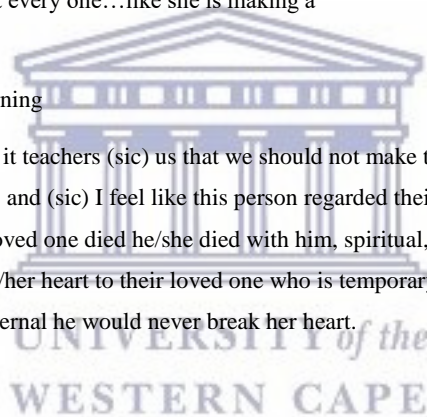
3.10 This poem reminds me of my religion as it teaches (sic) us that we should not make the centre of our life and heart any other but God. and (sic) I feel like this person regarded their loved one as he so much (sic) that when the loved one died he/she died with him, spiritual, emotionally etc. He or she gave the key to his/her heart to their loved one who is temporary where as if she had to give it to God who is eternal he would never break her heart.

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Vultures

1. I think this poem is about the way of life. In this case the way of life of the vulture. The way it is serving. That is the way God created it to survive. It is the way that everything is suppose (sic) to be. The way God created things are perfect. There is no human-being (sic) that could have done a better job at creating al (sic) living and non living (sic) things.

3. 1 Yes school has a structure. They have values and the purpose of school is for students to get an education for their future and this also creates job opportunity (sic) for people. It is the way of life at the end of the day you need to get yourself well educated to get a good job and to provide for yourself



3.2 Yes. Everybody has family. Even when things do not always goes (sic) as plan we always expect them to be there

3.3 No

3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 No

3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

3.13 No



Poem: Funeral Blues

1. I think this poem is about a family who is left heartbroken due to the fact that they have lost the head of the family or a close member in the family.

2. Death and love because in the beginning of the poem in lines 1-4 stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone, Prevent the dog from breaking (sic) with a juicy bone, silence the pianos with muffled drum Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come. This give an image of a funeral of a soldier occurring A soldier with a family that has now lost a member of the family.

3.1 No

3.2 Yes because at a young age I lost the head of my family. At first it did not matter to me because I did not have a connection with him. Recently it hit me because all of my siblings have good memories with him and they keep telling how proud I would make him if I pasted (sic) this year.

3.3 No

3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 No

3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 yes

3.13 Yes

3.14 A lot of other things that is way too much for me to write right now

Poem: A Hard Frost

1. I think this poem is about a slave that was given something and she valued it.

LEARNER RESPONSE

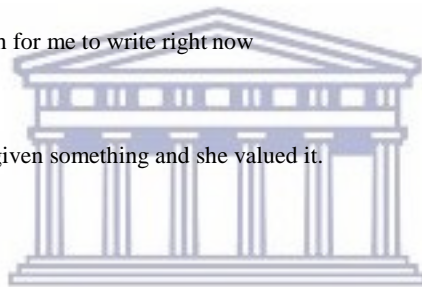
Poem: Vultures

1. To me this poem is very sad because these people are so poor that they eat off from a swollen corpse at the slaughter house and they are very poor and living in a dangerous and perhaps crime rated area and therefore (sic) the children awaits (sic) his arrival at home, but the poem also displays the Love (sic) he has for his children.

2. Poverty, crime and love

3. School- Yes, because if they live in a crime rated area it would be very dangerous for the fathers (sic) children to go to school but if they don't go they won't get the proper education and then they'll stay in that crime and poverty strict (sic) area.

Family- In this yes, because if you don't earn a (sic) income and you do nothing and do nothing everyday, your parents are obviously going to say something about it and they are going to get upset because and therefore arguments accure (sic) and families can or do sometimes fall apart.



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3.3 Yes, in a situation like this you will be able to see who your true friends are and that when your (sic) not yourself who will stand by you.

3.4 Yes, someone or people in the community where you live are like the vultures who eats (sic) from the swollen corpse and then they cuddle the corpse, like the people who are nice to your face but speak to others behind your back.

3.5 No

3.6 Yes. The vultures eating on the corpse could be a metaphore (sic) for the gangsterism happening, like the vultures that are almost stealing the same with the gangsters who are always stealing and creating havoc.

3.7 No

3.8 Yes, the vultures eating on the dead corpse is in some was (sic) stealing

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. I think the poem is about some (sic) that is loved by another person but that someone dies. Perhaps this someone meant everything to her and she is now almost nothing and nothing is no longer good for or to her because he (her love) is now dead.

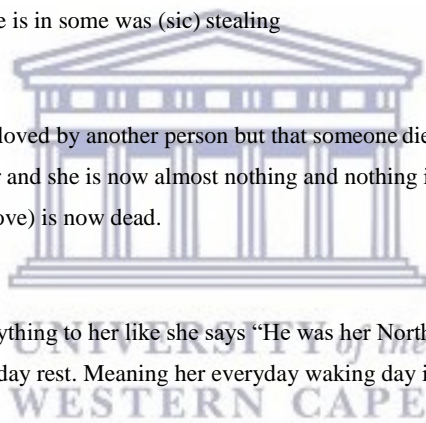
2. Death and love

Love because he loved her and he meant everything to her like she says "He was her North, South, East and West, working week and Sunday rest. Meaning her everyday waking day is for him.

Death. Because he dies and now she is sad and she says she was wrong in thinking that their love would last forever, and because of this death she now want to silence everything and everything for her was stopped so she in some way is (sic) also dead inside or is dying inside.

3.3 The relationship they have with each other she really loves him and it makes me sad because I wouldn't want to lose the love of my life and I would probably die inside everyday and I would not want him to go through anything like that or of that sort either.

3.10 In most religion it is a generally it is sad when the passing of a loved one



Poem: A Hard Frost

1. The poem is about the changing of seasons and the effect it has on the plants and flowers. The poem is about winter but in the winter (sic) spring days occur so its reffered (sic) to as a mockery spring the same as a bride who looks normal but when she has her beautiful gown on she looks beautiful until she soon has to take the gown off and return to her normal self

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Vultures

1. The poem is about nature, love, animals, humans and creatures. It could be two birds that are completely inlove, (sic) they live in this abandoned tree that barely has leaves and just basically have branches and they are cuddling in the nest the male bird is keeping his mate warm. They hunt their prey together. In line 30 the poet seem (sic) to be referring to humans. The commandment he is tired, fed up of all the humans that he is guarding at the camp so he is going home for rest and first to get some delicious chocolates for his children waiting at home for his return.

2. -Nature

-Love

-Humanly

3.1 No

3.2 Yes. The two birds protecting each other and hunting their prey together and the commandant of the camp going home to his family.

3.3 Yes

3.4 No

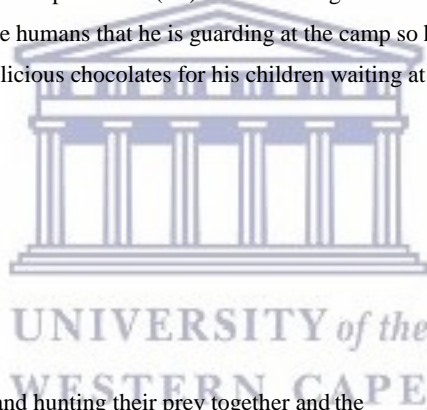
3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 Yes. The two birds living in an abandoned tree/ house

3.8 No

3.9 No



3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

3.13 No

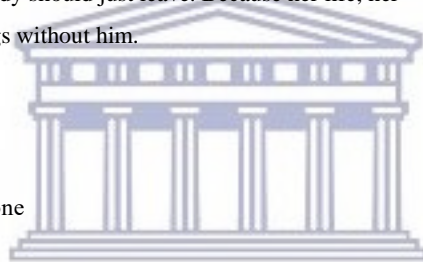
Poem: Funeral Blues

1. Well I think the poem is about a very well-known man that (sic) died and his funeral is being held. He was an officer. He served the community well and on this day of his funeral hes (sic) wife wants everything to be perfect for him because he was a good man. The man what (sic) passed on was very special to his wife and she literally couldn't live without. And now that her husband is gone, she gives up on love. She basically believes that she has nothing to live for, so everything and everybody should just leave. Because her life, her soulmate is gone and she is unable to do things without him.

2. Love- married couple

Death-husband died

Obsession- obsessed with the fact that he's gone



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LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. I think the poem is about someone who is trying to find love.

2. The theme is love.

3 No I cannot relate to the theme, because I haven't experienced anything like this.

4. -This poem makes me think about my Grandmother because she was alway (sic) a person to look for things that makes one smile.

- It makes me think about my friends, because when I'm down they will lift me up in anyway (sic) they can

-I can't really say It reminds me of where im (sic) from because the area is quite rough and people dont (sic) care about each others (sic) feeling.

-It does not make me think about school.

-It does not make me think about culture

-It only reminds me a little bit of when I used to go an (sic) visit my grandmother at her grave, we would always take some flowers.

Poem: Vultures

1. I don't really no (sic) what the poem is about.

2. Vultures

3. No I cannot relate to this.

4. – no it does not remind me of school

- It does not remind me of anything

Poem: Remember

1. It's about her not wanting her loved one to forget her

2. She does not want to be forgotten

3. Yes, because one day when I am no more I would like my friends to rember (sic) me for who I am



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LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Vultures

1. I think this poem is about the struggle of African people that (sic) has (sic) been effected by collonialism. (sic) Particularly of how Africans have been treated inhuman (sic) and about their struggles. I think the 'vulture' here is referred to their tormentors.

2. Themes or Topics: Cruelty, love, hopelessness, family

3.1 No

3.2 No

3.3 No

3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 No

3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

3.13 No

3.14 This poem particularly makes me think of the cruelty, racism and mistreatment of Africans due to their colour/culture that is still happening in the 21st Century. With all the laws that society have (sic) one would think this issue would be eradicated, however it is not so. Not only of cruelty on Africans this poem makes me think of the mistreatment of humans internationally that is being condoned especially when it comes to muslims. What happened to human rights? This issue of cruelty and mistreatment of human beings seems to be an endless ripple sadly.

Poem: A Hard Frost

1. About nature and death

2. Nature- the poet makes use of the elements of nature.

3.1 No

3.2 No

3.3 No

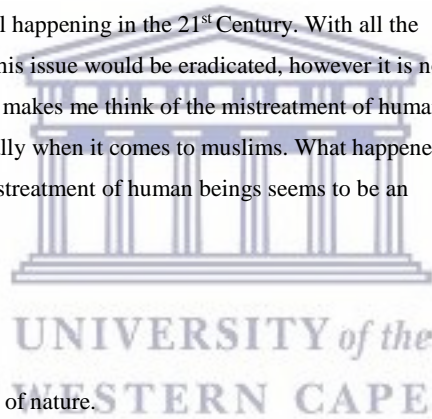
3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 No

3.8 No



3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

3.13 No

3.14 No

Poem: Funeral Blues.

1. The (sic) is about love and death

2. No

3.1 No

3.2 No

3.3 No

3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 No

3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

3.13 No

3.14 No



LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. The first part he talks about a place he had not been in so long, could be years. He discovers that the place he once played in has changed. He discovers that the door of the chapel was locked, so he turned back to the garden of love, where so many flowers grew.

He basically discovers that his childhood memories, the place he loved so much, has now been turned into a dark grave yard. Depressing to him because he saw how the garden of love looked before.

2. Sadness

Shocking

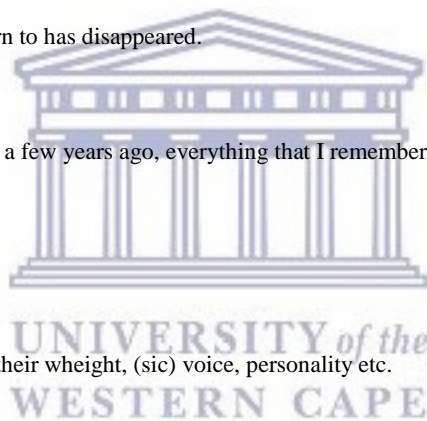
Disappointed that the place he wanted to return to has disappeared.

3. Yes, a park close to my home was renewed a few years ago, everything that I remember was there, only lies in my memories now.

4. – No it does not make me think of school.

-Yes, the chapel (church)

-Friends change as the years get older, either their weight, (sic) voice, personality etc.



Poem: Vultures

1. He talks about different things, his imagination runs wild.

2. Brocken (sic)

Heartless

3. No

4. No (Your school)

-Religion, everything you feel, your brain links to everything and God knows.

-Friends are extravagant and fun like the words in the poem

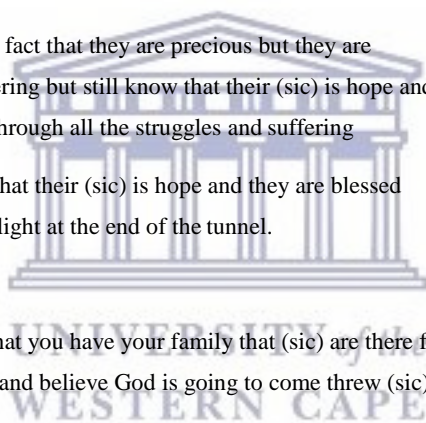
Poem: Remember

1. The poet wants his love to move on with his/her life wants (sic) she/he dies
 2. Saying goodbye is hard
 3. No
 4. -Yes it reminds me of the people that (sic) say goodbye
- No (religion)
- People die especially family so you have to move on

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: An African Elegy

1. The poem is about people suffering and the fact that they are precious but they are suffering bearing (sic) poverty. They are suffering but still know that their (sic) is hope and they are able to sing and dream sweet things through all the struggles and suffering
 2. The suffering of the people but they know that their (sic) is hope and they are blessed through all this pain and they know there is a light at the end of the tunnel.
- 3.1 No
- 3.2 Thankfull (sic) and grateful (sic) to God that you have your family that (sic) are there for you and even in suffering you can be hopeful and believe God is going to come threw (sic) for them.
- 3.4 Nobody in community has to know what you are going through it's just the fact that you have God with you and have faith and be happy threw (sic) the suffering and people will think you are doing so well but little do they know you are actually suffering
- 3.5 No
- 3.6 No
- 3.7 Does definately (sic) make me think of poverty because people are suffering despite their situations they have hope and faith that God will provide for them and be patient and good things comes to those who wait



3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 Definitely (sic) religion (sic) because God created humans so that you can face the good and bad and puts (sic) your (sic) sometimes through tests to see if you can handle the suffering and pain and also thank and praise him threw (sic) the good that he does.

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. It's about a garden of love that changed like someone's heart was broken. The poem is about a person that (sic) discovers that his/she (sic) love has changed. There (sic) feeling of love and passion has changed to miserable (sic), a closed down person (chapel were (sic) shut). Where there were flowers and graves. The word black in the poem relates to darkness, graves maybe sadness "And the binding with briars" like the person is hurt in some way and doesn't recognise their (sic) love.

2. The theme of the poem is about love and how love has changed. The person is going through a lot and doesn't want let someone in. They have sadness, pain and they are now protective.

3. Yes, I am a (sic) overprotective person and I sometimes don't recognise myself. I hold tention (sic) and pain from my past. The graves in the poem reminds me of all the people I lost in my life. The whole poem reflects how I feel sometimes.

4. -family

The hurt and lost that taught (sic) place in my family.

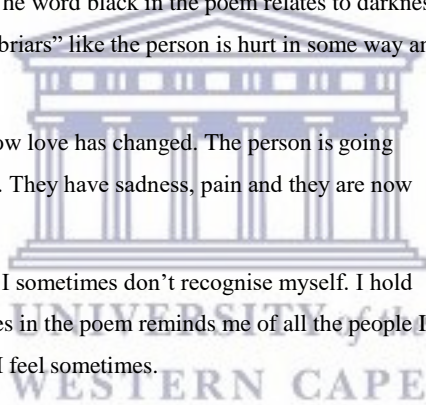
Poem: Vultures

1. The poem is about vultures and how violence seems normal to them. It's a daily job and is needed to hurt (sic) to be able to survive.

2. violence, survival

3. No it has violence and I don't like it.

4. School and where I live the crime (sic)



Poem: Remember

1. It is about someone who is dying and leaving behind a letter to remember (sic) the person. The one left behind should not be sad rather happy.

2. It has a miserable and gloomy theme in the beginning but uplifted and happy at the end.

3. Yes, I have lost a lot of people in my life but they would want me to be happy.

4-family

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: A Hard Frost

3.1 No

3.2 No

3.3 No

3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 No

3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

3.13 No

3.14 No



LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Vultures

1. I think this poem is about a family of vultures But this family of vultures could be referring to the life of a person and his life. This shows how difficult ones (sic) life can be. Someones (sic) life could be in danger because they might refer to their own home as a slaughter house and where evil lives. The poem refers to various types of families.

2. Family. In one family, the parents are doing as much as they can survive (sic) and take care of the children. In another family, it is a home of abuse, poverty or even substance abuse.

3.1 Yes. Sometimes I don't want to go to school for various reasons, but at the same time I go to school because I have to so I try to make the most of it and I find something to look forward to.

3.2 Yes. In any family there is love, care, hope and many more but sometimes there is not enough of this in each family. Some of us come from homes of divorced parents, poverty, abuse.

3.3 Yes. Friends and relationships is (sic) important.

3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 Yes. People who have become a gangster and they tend to do evil things.

3.8 You may commit crimes and do illegal things.

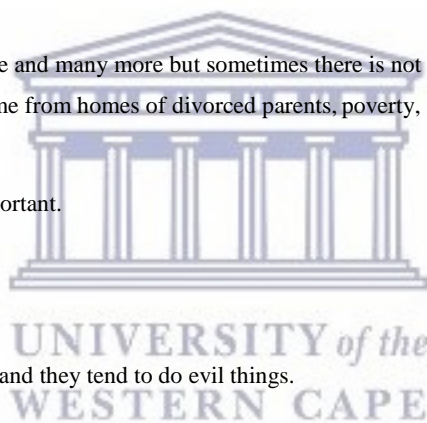
3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. This poem is about a funeral taking place. This is what happens at a funeral. It is the vulnerability of people and the respect of everyone towards the person the (sic) passed away.



2. The themes (sic) of the poem is death (the deceased). It is also the morbid, sad atmosphere that is present at a funeral.

3.1 Yes. Especially on a Monday when no one wants to go to school. The monday (sic) blues, the beginning of the week.

3.2 No

3.3 No

3.4 No

3.6 Yes, funerals might occur due to the actions of gangsters.

3.8 Yes. Crime is everywhere. It might have been a crime that someone committed (sic) to have caused the funeral to take place.

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

Poem: A Hard Frost

1. This poem is about someone's life that can change drastically due to something so quick and simple, how your life can change because one (sic) small act

2. Change- drastic change of something or someone in your life

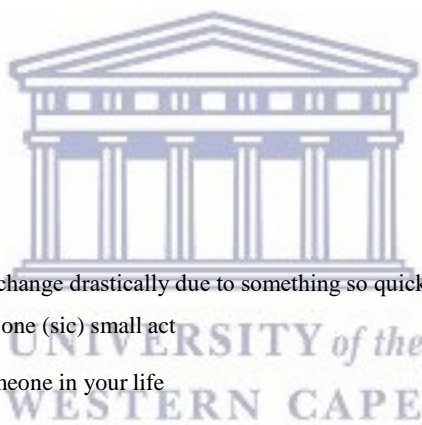
3.1 Yes. Decision making is a big thing in school

3.2 Yes changes take place all the time in families. Changes such as an issue breaking up a family.

3.3 Yes. One wrong simple mistake can either make or break your relationship with a friend or someone special in your life like someone from outside your relationship with someone special can do damaging things to your relationship

3.4 No

3.5 No



3.10 No

3.11 No

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: A Hard Frost

1. About a winter that came too early; so early in fact that it is not real it is fake
2. Seasons and the weather
3. It makes me think about the weather that is about it; I can't relate to this poem; I wish I could but...if I am being really candid this poem does nothing to my emotional mind; it doesn't strike a nerve or cause tingling feelings to crawl up or down my spine; I'm not criticizing the poet I am merely displaying or rather disclosing my inability to relate to and understand the poems relevance.

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Vultures

1. About someone that (sic) lost hope/courage but still shows love and affections
2. Yes, because when I read the poem it makes me feel some type of emotion

If I feel some type of emotion that is how I can identify the major themes and topics

3.1 No

3.2 Yes, because I have kinda (sic) lost hope/courage in my family

I feel like this poem is a sad story, like my life

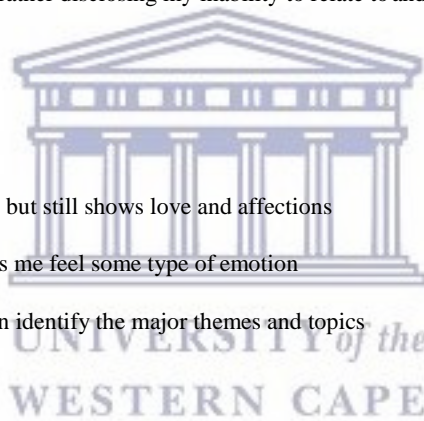
3.5 Yes because Mitchells Plain is basically a place where many things happen

Where most people lost hope for many reasons.

I feel like in Mitchells Plain there is "everlasting evil" because of the crime rates that are extremely high

People are cruel, well most of them

3.4 Yes I live in an area called Tafelsig. Tafelsig is just another word for a sad story.



There are times I walk in my area and when I look around, I see hungry children, gangsters walking around looking for people they could rob for drugs or some of them would rob people so they could buy something for them to eat, I don't really want to think the worst of my community

3.6 No

3.7 Yes, because people that suffer from poverty are usually the people that (sic) "lost hope/courage."

3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No, because my childhood was based on good experiences.

When I was a bit younger, I was very closed minded and didn't really think about the negative parts of life.

I only thought of the positive part of life

3.13 No

Poem: A Hard Frost

1. I think the poem is about replacement and being unhappy

2. Yes, because the title gives me an idea of what the poem is about.

So that kind of gives me an idea of the major themes and topics

3.1 No

3.2 No

3.3 No

3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 No



3.7 No

3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. I think this poem is about a person who loved someone dearly and thought love would last forever but then later on realises (sic) that nothing last forever.

2. Yes, because reading the poem puts me in a state of mind where I can relate to it.

That is how I know or can identify the themes or topics

3.1 No

3.2 No

3.3 Yes, because what the poet is saying I can relate to it

I've kind of been in a similar situation

"I thought that love would last forever. I was wrong" Those words grabbed my emotions because it is true.

3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 No

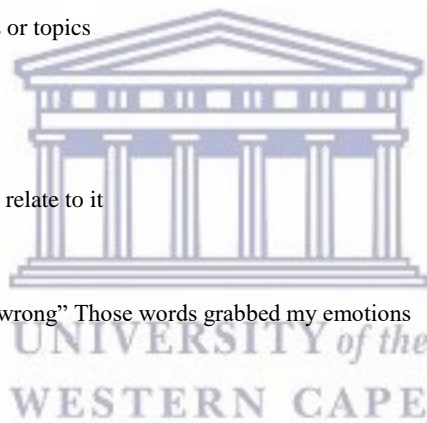
3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No



LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. I think this poem is about a person who returned to the place he went when he was little.

The place has changed since he last saw it. It changed from a garden filled with “love” and beautiful different flowers to a holy ground that the Church is situated on. There is now a grave where there used to be a garden filled with flowers.

I also think that he could be witnessing a funeral since the Priests are dressed in black gowns.

2. The theme could be the poet longing for a place that he used to visit, he seems upset that his Garden of Love has been replaced and turned into something else.

3. I could relate to the theme because I used to live with my grandmother when I was younger, but ever since she died I never stepped foot in her house again.

When I rode past it the other day the whole structure of it had changed.

4. - It does not make me think of school

-It reminds me of religion because it refers to the Priests looming around the Church grounds

- friends: figuratively it remind me that I in a few years (sic) time our lives will change and we will probably no longer see each other

-family: it reminds me of my grandmother

Poem: Vultures

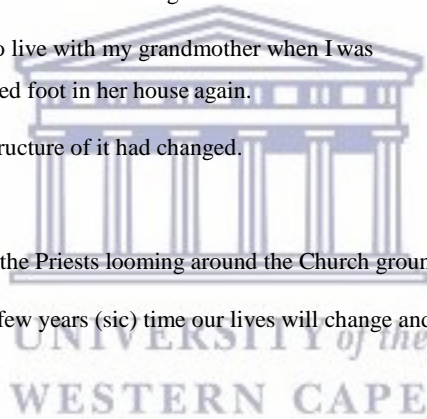
1. The poem is about how barbaric vultures are but they do what they have to do for survival.

It is given human characteristics throughout the poem and it is expertly written.

2. It is the life of vultures and how they feed or hunt.

How they scavenge corpses (sic) to fill their hungry stomachs

3. I cannot relate to this poem, but the adjectives remind me of my mood sometimes



Poem: Remember

1. The (sic) poem is about the poet who wants (sic) urgently wants to be remembered when she dies. She is quite desperate to be remembered.
2. The theme is about a woman whom (sic) does not want to be forgotten by her loved one when she passes on.
3. I can relate because I too want to remembered when I'm gone. I would like my life to be an influence on someone. I would like to leave an impact in anyone's memory.
4. The poem makes me reflect that it is my last year of school and that I will never attend school again.

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. This is about a funeral for a loved one who has died. The person which is a woman, lost her man he (sic) is very sad she say (sic) that he thought love would lost forever.

She says that "He was his North, his South, his east and west."

2. It's sad because this person lost his lover/friend/family

It is about deaths and love

3.3 Yes it could be about family or a lover and in the poem their (sic) is proof that he says "my working week and my sunday rest"

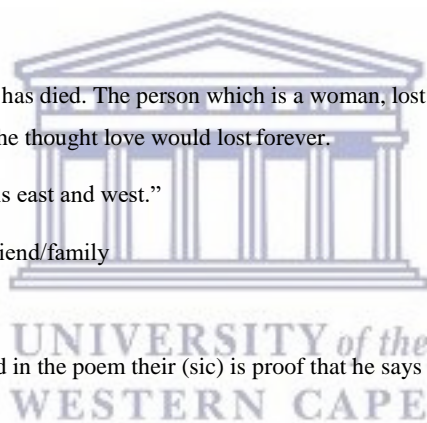
3.14 When my father died

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Vultures

1. This poem is about a vulture who with his male and little ones reside in a charnel-house, which one might think is strange to found (sic) a foul and disgusting environment to be the perfect place to start a home and even born a few offsprings. (sic)

A smell of human roast would be a human burning flesh, which may be a war that happened around the vultures or a charnel-house in which they take shelter was one for humans, almost like a torture what the vultures smell before coming home.



However in the depths of the evil around them by God a glimmer of hope and lay within a cold- hearted being, and yes even one with a kind and hopeful heart can the evil reside within them.

2. The major topics could be that they have an insight of the vulture and where one would reside. Another could be that of the “fumes of human roast” that the setting of poem could be within a time of war or where the vultures reside in was once a torture chamber but they (sic) house may have been burnt (sic) down and the smell of the flesh from humans lingers.

3.1 No comment

3.2 No comment

3.3 Almost on (sic) battle because you may consider someone as a friend and you may be betrayed by that very friend and your way to almost like a revenge would take them to a house that may be deserted and to express my anger would torture them for how they have tortured me for betraying my trust.

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. Death, Sadness, Empty

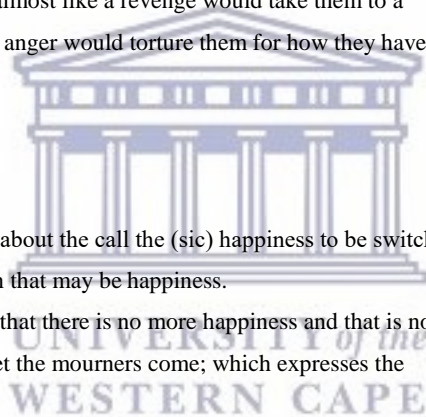
2. In the first stanza it's almost speaking about the call the (sic) happiness to be switched off, to prevent any glimmer of reaction that may be happiness.

The last two lines of the stanza shows that there is no more happiness and that is now time to cry and feel sadden (sic) like let the mourners come; which expresses the feeling of grieve. (sic)

3. The major themes is mostly about death, the title even indicates that the theme is about death in the word 'funeral' and 'blues' which would mean sadness. Another theme is that about a passion of love. In lines 9 to 12 it explains how the person whom you shared an intimate relationship with.

The last theme could be of the loss of love, in lines 12 to 16 that she/he may never be with their loved one again.

3.1 No comment



3.2 To know that you can no longer be beside my family is what I thought firstly about the poem. I would express the very same emotions about how losing my family would mean I lose my whole meaning of life.

Poem: A Hard Frost

1. I am not quite sure what the poems was about but on (sic) “image of spring” it could signify the transformation from winter to spring.

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. I think the poem is about death of a loved one. He was her everything, basically her life. Now that his (sic) gone there is nothing good left in the world. There should not be happiness and good times.
All should mourn and everything that makes you happy should stop or be taken away.

2. Death and love.
-This woman had so much love for this person. He died and his (sic) been taken away, her happiness has been taken away and she feels the rest of the world should experience it too.

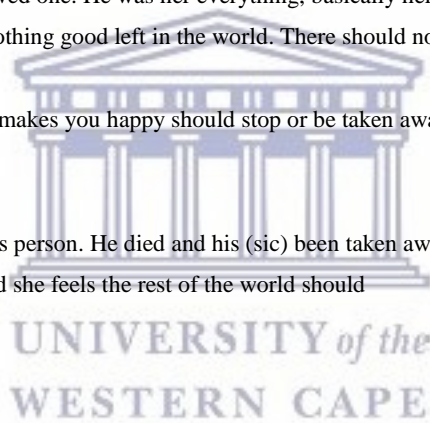
3.3 Yes

It makes me think about the loved ones in my life. How I would feel if I lost them.
I would not be able to cope but I would not want the rest of the world to feel it with me.

I would not want all the good and beautiful things to go away aswell. (sic)

3.10 Yes. In the poem they speak about a coffin and the religion that immediately pops to mind is Christianity

3.12 Yes. Even though I was small and do not remember much, the poem makes me think about the loved ones I have lost.



3.14 Yes. The poem stirs up feelings that makes (sic) me scared and opens up wounds about loosing (sic) some one (sic) close or even the thought of loosing (sic) your most beloved.

Poem: A Hard Frost

1. The season changing is being compared to a bride. How the frost comes and covers everything in white like a bride dressed in white.

Poem: Vultures

1. I think the poem is about demeanour (sic) of vultures and humans are some what (sic) similar
Vultures showing love and caring for there (sic) family yet evil in there (sic) own sense as they are carnivores. Humans showing love and caring yet evil in the sense that there (sic) love has cruel ways.
Vultures and humans are kind of being compared to an extent.

2. Love and evil.

It explains how vultures are evil yet they still show love, and humans are meant to love yet it can be evil.

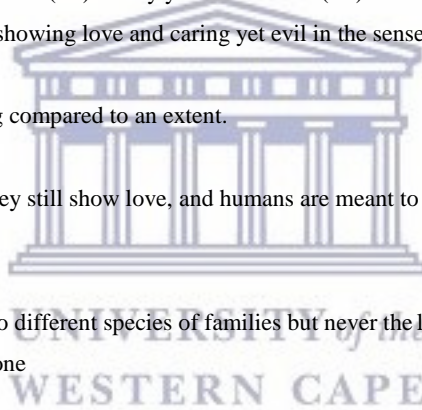
3.2 Yes. The poem speaks about families. Two different species of families but never the less (sic) families. An animal one and human one

3.3 Yes

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: The Garden of Love

1. The poem is about William who visited a garden that he once, as a little child use (sic) to play on. The garden was around a Chapel that he curiously investigated.
The poet speaks about this “garden of love” and Chapel in love, “My joys and desires”
2. Love, religion



3. Yes, the “garden of love” that he explains about. Sounds very calming and soothing and it brings him this sort of happiness as he reminisce (sic) on his childhood days.

I feel a connection with his view on the garden because I too have a place that makes me feel as he did.

4. The poem makes me think of religion and nature. The Chapel and priests brings (sic) out a religious side of the poet (in my opinion) and the garden reminds me of nature and how beautiful it is. It does not make me think of school nor my place of living.

It makes me think of family and culture, because of the tomb-stones and Chapel

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Vultures

1. At first I think it is about actual birds that wrong together (sic) well not wrong because they are animals and are suppose (sic) to do these things. But as it goes on I see human objects being mentioned. And I feel like parents would do anything to make sure their offspring survives and they would do it together because it in the world of today it is all about survival.
2. Survival, love, compassion

3.1 No

3.2 I think it reminds me of family, the way they hunt and hunt in order to survive. They (sic) way parents would (sic) hard just to make sure us as children get what we need and also they would try now and then to give us something sweet that we would honestly love.

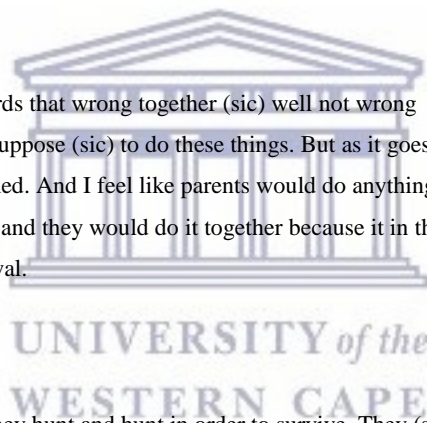
We have in family also those family members that (sic) look for bad in you only to be able to speak about you And to back bite you.

3.3 I feel this is what friendship and relationship suppose (sic) to be like.

Someone that would fight with you and not against you.

3.4 No

3.5 Mitchells Plain, because we got so many drug dealers eg (sic) parents, but they do it because sometimes it is the only way and they no longer have a choice, parents hide it



away for a while but as the child gets older they see that things might not always make it better.

3.6 No

3.7 No

3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

3.13 No

3.14 No

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. I think it is about a woman who is in love with a man that had died. And she feel (sic) everyone should know and everythink (sic) should stop because he is such a great guy. She feels everyone should know and remember and that he should be honoured.

2. Death, love, remembrance

3.2 This reminds me about family because you love your family no matter what. And when you honestly love someone you want everyone to remember him when his (sic) gone especially if he is a good guy you would that (sic) and respect to be shown for your loved one (sic) death.

3.3 With your friends and relationship you love them dearly and remembrance (sic) is the most important thing, you want respect from everyone at his or her funeral because you would know this person is a good person no matter what.

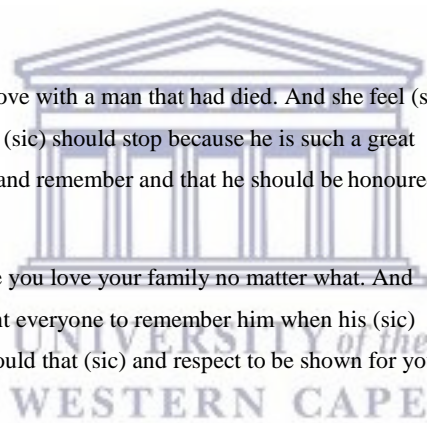
3.4 It reminds me of my community because when someone dies everyone will contribute to the funeral and make it easy for the family out of respect for the death.

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 No

3.8 No



3.9 No

3.19 No

3.11 No

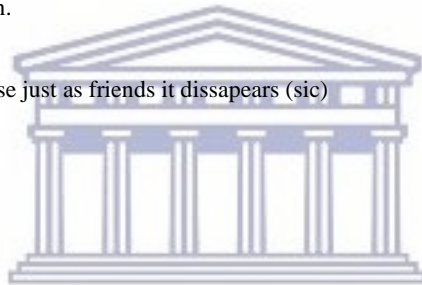
3.12 No

3.13 No

3.14 No

Poem: A Hard Frost

1. It is about a hard frost that comes and steals the beautiful weather and the spring is only lasting for a little while the same way a bride has her dress only for a few hours it is temporary and it will be gone soon.
2. Seasons, cold, beautiful
 - 3.3 It reminds me of friends because just as friends it disappears (sic)



LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Felix Randal

1. I think this poem is about a young man that (sic) died of a disease that could not be cured. Felix Randal seemed very important to the poet, or could even be his child. Before Felix died, the poet took Felix to church so that he could be baptised and that his soul would be at peace and prepared before Felix dies.
2. Diseases and illnesses: can affect (sic) anyone at any given time in life. It is unpredictable and has horrible consequences if not treated immediately. Death is also a theme in this poem because the poet illustrates his memories that he had of Felix.

3.1 No

3.2 Yes, because my aunt had cancer, but fortunately she identified it early and it was cured. Even though she is still alive this poem just reminded me of all the emotional struggles I was going through when she told us she had cancer. The first time I heard that it was as if I was experiencing flashbacks of all the fun times and wonderful memories we had together. She is like my second

mother. It was very heartbreaking (sic) to her (sic) suffering and I felt absolutely hopeless because I could not do anything about it but pray.

3.3 It just reminds me how unpredictable life could be, so it should give you a reason to treat your friends or loved ones with respect and just have wonderful and ecstatic times and definitely less arguments (sic)

3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 If the disease could be cured, maybe they did not have enough money to pay for proper medication.

3.8 No

3.9 No

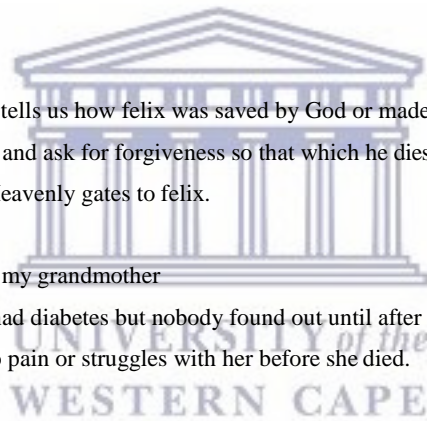
3.10 Yes, because the poem tells us how Felix was saved by God or made peace with Him and confessed and ask for forgiveness so that when he dies, God will hopefully open His Heavenly gates to Felix.

3.11 No

3.12 Yes, it reminded me of my grandmother

3.13 Yes, my grandmother had diabetes but nobody found out until after her death because we witnessed no pain or struggles with her before she died.

3.14 No



Poem: An African Elegy

1. I think the poem is about life after death. It tells us not to be afraid of death because all our struggles and hardships will be lifted when we die. Death is inevitable. It talks about how grateful and appreciative.
 2. Death once again. Also, afterlife. It also tells us not to be afraid to face death and that it could be a better place to be than on this dangerous, harmful planet we call earth.
- 3.1 How we take our education for granted and teachers too.

3.2 Family serves as gifts and miracles that God has provided and blessed us with.

3.3 To be appreciative of our family members and spend time with them while we have.

3.4 The hardships people suffer

3.5 No

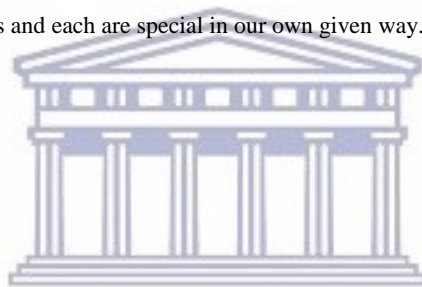
3.6 No

3.7 Poverty is a major problem in South Africa, in the whole world actually and is extremely difficult to eradicate.

3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 The poem represents that we are miracles and each are special in our own given way. It tells us God accepts us for who we are.



LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Felix Randal

1. A man who runs a ministry to aid all people who are sick and the poem is about one person who is sick Felix Randal (sic)
2. Sickness- reason being, because the poem talks about a sick person.
Preparation- (sic) he knows he is going to die so he has to prepare himself for the worst.

3.1 No and Yes. The ministry is sort of like the teachers that (sic) care about you and wants (sic) to see you get better at what you do.

3.2 Yes, they care about you and want to see you get better because they have a stronger connection than anyone else.

3.3 Yes, you cannot see the person you love die.

Poem: An African Elegy

1. A person who is accepting that they are human. God created him/her in his own image, to experience pain and thank God for all the wonderful things he had done to this earth to bless us with air, pain and when happy you don't curse someone but see the good in them and what they do. Life is a gift that cannot trade for anything.

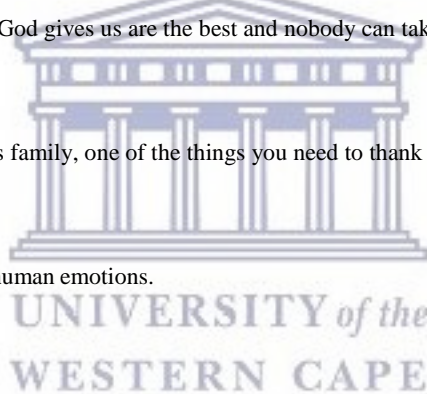
2. Thankfulness- thanking God for the love and hate (the feelings we experience from our daily life)

Life- no matter what, life is cool and we are going to have to accept it either way

3.1 No, although we do appreciate life, life on school is not thankful but in some way it is a yes because the people God gives us are the best and nobody can take their place.

3.2 Yes, a major part of your life is family, one of the things you need to thank God for, a "secret miracle"

3.3 Yes, we need more people to experience human emotions.



Poem: Vultures

1. The way vultures think in their natural habitate (sic) and the things they do through their natural daily lives.

It sounds as though they are off to do a very important job.

LEARNER RESPONSE

Poem: Funeral Blues

1. The speaker of the poem speaks about how he lost someone that (sic) was important to him perhaps a loved one. He also speaks about this particular person's funeral, he explains in detail what happened on the day of the funeral.

- 2. - misery
- despair
- death
- life

3.1 No

3.2 No

3.3 No

3.4 No

3.5 Yes, it reminds me of all the crucial deaths that occurred in Mitchells Plain for the past few years. Innocent people who were killed in most communities. Mostly young children.

3.6 Young people that (sic) are involved in gangs by often killed by gang leaders or gang rivals. Everyday we hear people die because of gangsterism, sometimes innocent people killed by gang leaders.

3.7 No

3.8 No

3.9 Many people dies (sic) because of substance abuse, for example overdose.

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

3.13 No

3.14 No

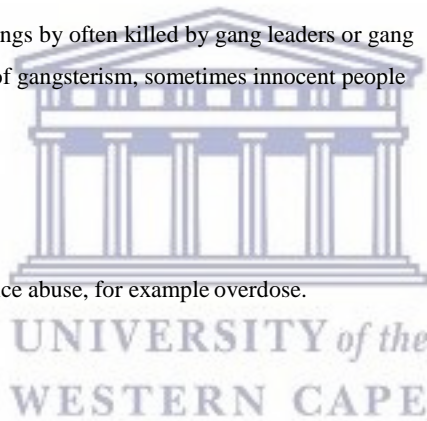
Poem: A Hard Frost

2. Nature, weather

3.1 No

3.2 No

3.3 No



3.4 No

3.5 No

3.6 No

3.7 No

3.8 No

3.9 No

3.10 No

3.11 No

3.12 No

3.13 No

3.14 No

1. This poem is about a person who is taking a ride down memory lane. This particular person is reliving he/her past experience and memories that have happened to he/her (sic) in the Past. This poem is not only about his expences, (sic) its (sic) also about the things that occured (sic) around him for instance in he's (sic) environment and community

2. Love

-experiences

-happy

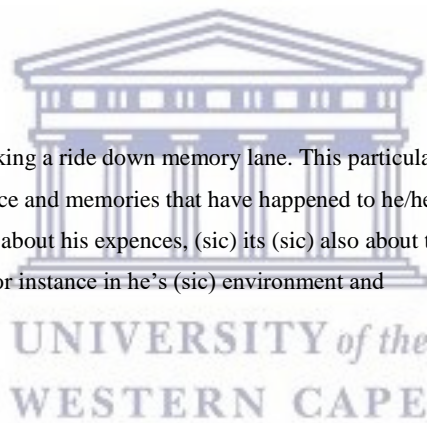
-family

3.1 No

3.2 No

3.3 No

3.4 Yes, the community I'm currently living in have (sic) similar experiences. In my community there are many deaths



- 3.4 No
- 3.5 No
- 3.6 No
- 3.7 No
- 3.8 No
- 3.9 No
- 3.10 No
- 3.11 No
- 3.12 No
- 3.13 No
- 3.14 No



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