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**LITERATURE 3B TAKE-HOME EXAM
ANSWER SHEET**

A. PLAGIAATVERKLARING

Cursus: Literature 3B: Eighteenth-Century British Literature

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Ondergetekende, student in de cursus 'Literature 3B: Eighteenth-Century British Literature' tijdens het academisch jaar 2017–2018, verklaart hierbij kennis te hebben genomen van de plagiaatregeling van de Faculteit Geesteswetenschappen en deze te hebben begrepen.

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B. Your Essays [start typing below the line]

Caleb Williams and Blake's notion of mind-forged manacles

In the poem *London*, William Blake writes about "mind-forged manacles" and informs the reader that he hears it "in every voice and in every ban" (ll. 7-8). Mind-forged manacles can be interpreted as manacles that are not real, but that are only in the mind. In that sense the term can also be used to indicate a certain mind control that one party exercises over another, exercised in various ways, mainly through reputation. In the novel *Caleb Williams* this is the case, it is evident in Falkland, his trial, his influence on Caleb, but also in his influence on others. This influence is based on power, the power of the upper class.

An early instance of the mind-forged manacles is in the trial of Falkland. In truth, Falkland is the murderer of Tyrrel. But he has a long standing reputation and he is thought to have an altruistic character. After a small inquiry after Falkland's conduct on the evening of the murder, he is given room to make his defence. All Falkland does in his defence is make a plea for his character. "My life has been spent in the keenest and most unintermitted sensibility to reputation" (Volume I. 139) He makes a strong appeal to the emotions of the spectators, persuading them to think it absurd that he could be the murderer. Even going as far as to say that he would have lived in perpetual beggary to have preserved Tyrrel's life. At the end of his defence, everyone applauds. A few weeks later the Hawkins get hanged for his crime. The mind-forged manacles are in this sense worn by everyone who is persuaded by the

reputation of the rich Falkland.

Later in the novel, after Caleb has lived in London for a while, he decides to go to a small market town in Wales to live a peaceful life as a watchmaker. This plan is fruitful for a while and Caleb becomes acquainted with the townsfolk. However, after a while the villagers shy away from him. Nobody wants to talk to him anymore and nobody comes to him for their watches. Soon after this Caleb finds the cause, he finds a copy of "The wonderful and Surprising History of Caleb Williams". Even in a small market town the reach of Falkland's influence is felt. The mind-forged manacles are in this case not representative of Falkland's reputation and how that biases others, but on Caleb Williams' reputation and how that biases others against him, even though it is not based on truth (and possibly also created by the influence of Falkland). These mind-forged manacles also put a strain on Caleb's emotions and in fact he feels shackled too. "Was there no hope that remained for me? Was there no period, past or in prospect, that could give relief to my sufferings?" (Volume III. 418)

At the end of the story Caleb faces Falkland in the court of law. Caleb makes a fervent appeal and Falkland submits to it, confessing his guilt. The real culprit is caught and Caleb has his innocence. But paradoxically, Caleb feels enormous guilt. "I have been his murderer." "It would have been merciful in comparison, if I had planted a dagger in his heart." "Waking or sleeping, I still behold him." (Volume III. 451) In this way it is made apparent that Falkland's mind-forged manacles are also on Caleb Williams. He is unable to look at the facts and rejoice that he is now free. Instead he mourns about a murderer who has ruined his life.

Wordsworth's definition of poetry against his poem *I wandered lonely as a cloud*

In the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth's outlines how, according to him, poetry is supposed to be "the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation" (p. 293). This prompted Hazlitt's lecture on the "new school" of poetry, and according to Hazlitt this school had expelled traditions of craft as surely as the French Revolution had expelled the monarchy (Susan 108). Perhaps the most clear definition that Wordsworth gives is that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in a state of tranquillity" (p. 295). Wordsworth claims that real poetry is void of craft. Critics have pointed out that the Preface unfolds a dangerously simplistic concept of language (Susan 110). In this essay the poem *I wandered lonely as a cloud* will be examined in the light of the definitions that Wordsworth gives for real poetry, highlighting some aspects of this poem that complicate his claims.

The last stanza of *I wandered lonely as a cloud* is, notably, in itself about a recollection in a moment of tranquillity.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.
(*I wandered lonely as a cloud*, ll. 19-24)

Particularly, it is as if we get a look at Wordsworth production process. He is lying on a couch and he experiences "a powerful overflow of feeling recollected in a

moment of tranquillity". It seems as if all he has to do is write the experience down in poetic form. That would be in line with his definition of real poetry.

Quite contradictive to this almost religious sense of true poetry, in 1815 a newer version of this poem added a stanza.

They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of the bay.

If true poetry is void of art and craft, then it is strange that a poem should be adjusted. The process of editing a poem contradicts the claim that the only thing that a poet does is pour out his soul in measured strains. It signals conscious thinking about the effect of adding another stanza. It also contradicts the claim that the poem is pure nature void of art. An analysis of these lines shows that there is some craft involved. The first line has no punctuation and stops at the word "never-ending line" as if the line really is never ending and stretches forth across the page. Making the imagery of the daffodils even more vivid (Wolfson 112).

Another argument that speaks against the poem being "spontaneous overflow of feelings" is the fact that the poem was composed two years after the actual event of actually seeing the daffodils. This seems to imply that the flowers which his sister noticed and which she neatly wrote down about in her diary, didn't really impress him. He used his sister's journal for inspiration, thereby not using his own experience, but his sister's. This obscures his claim that poetry "is the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation".

After an examination of the poem *I wandered lonely as a cloud* the definitions that Wordsworth gives concerning real poetry are complicated. He edited his texts which makes it questionable in how far the poem is about his own experiences. The definition that poetry is "The real language of men in a state of vivid sensation" seems to imply that the state of vivid sensation has to be one's own. The "spontaneous overflow of feelings recollected in a moment of tranquillity" are however not always his own as he used his sister's diary as a source of inspiration. The editing of the poem also suggests that this overflow of feelings was not entirely spontaneous but also calculated.

Gulliver's Travels as a parody of travel literature, and compared with *Robinson Crusoe*

Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is an eighteenth century novel that falls into the subgenre of traveller's tales. In the eighteenth century novels like this were highly popular. *Gulliver's Travels* is in many ways the quintessential travel book, alternately reproducing and parodying the conventions of the genre, and forcefully demonstrating its capabilities for conveying knowledge and critique (Fabricant 744). Verisimilitude is known to be a convention of this subgenre, this is seen in the title and beginning of both books. Contrasted with *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels* is much more fantastic. The plot of the story also contributes to the parodying effect, ending quite differently from *Robinson Crusoe*.

To sum up, this essay will show that *Gulliver's Travels* parodies traveller's novels like *Robinson Crusoe* and other traveller's tales, this is seen in the plot, and also in the exploitation of the popular conventions of this literary subgenre.

Both stories are presented as true stories. Many seventeenth and early eighteenth century novels were presented in that way because of the sense of reality. Swift parodies this convention. This is seen in the full title of both books. The full title of *Robinson Crusoe* is "*The Life and Strange Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*" which implies that Defoe wanted his readers to think of the story as a true story. The full title of *Gulliver's travels* is "*Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships*" even parodying the convention by adding a sequences of occupations in the title.

The beginning of the book uses the popular convention of verisimilitude.

Beginning in a letter to a cousin, which includes a date. And consequently offering an account of himself:

“My father had a small estate in Nottinghamshire ; I was the third of five sons. He sent me to Emanuel College in Cambridge, at fourteen years old, where I resided three years, and applied myself close to my studies...” (GT p. 1)

This introductory account of Gulliver is also a popular convention and therefore it is not surprising that it is similar to the beginning of *Robinson Crusoe*:

“I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York, of a good family, tho’not of that country, my father being a foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull...” (RC p. 1)

Gulliver’s travels parodies *Robinson Crusoe* and other traveller’s novels in the way that the travel story is highly fantastic. The stark contrast between the level of reality creates a sense of parody. In *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe creates a realistic world. He keeps anything fantastic away from his account of Robinson’s shipwreck and survival on the deserted island. He creates verisimilitude in carefully describing how Robinson survives without any overt supernatural interferences. He does not meet wonderful Liliputans or sophisticated Houyhnhnms. Crusoe survives by making a series of practical moves completely grounded in reality. He returns to the capsized ship and retrieves supplies, builds himself shelter, hunts, plants, cultivates wild grapes, and thrives through his own hard work and common sense. In contrast, *Gulliver travels* presents us a much more fantastic world with giant human, tiny humans, and kingdoms where horses rule.

Another instance of parodying is shown in the plot. Gulliver loses his identity his hope in humanity after arriving back in England for the last time, the whole context creates a sense of absurdity to the whole. The stark contrast lies in the fact that *Robinson Crusoe* is about a tough socio-psychological travel experience but eventually ends on a positive note. Gulliver, on the other hand, has been having dining parties (i.a.) with the Houyhnhnms. After leaving the talking horses and returns to England he is unable to reconcile himself with living among humans. Shunning his wife and talking with horses. The parodying effect is hard to miss: "My horses understand me tolerably well; I converse with them almost four hours every day. They are strangers to bridle or saddle; they live in great amity with me, and friendship to each other" (GT p. 200)

The Deserted Village and its political message

Oliver Goldsmith's poem *The Deserted Village* is a poem that can be read in light of the eighteenth century's changes. In his poem the simple joys of a rural life are celebrated in a nostalgic light. The speaker tells that he hoped to return to this peaceful way of life in his old age. The disappearance of this simple rural life is consequently lamented, blaming the state and the wealthy. The way in which the work of Goldsmith gives social commentary, and criticizes the wealthy and the state, gives the poem a highly political message.

Goldsmith laments the disappearance of rural life, this disappearance was due to the influence of the state. Goldsmith's begins his poem with "Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain" (l. 1.), which is a fictional village. Goldsmith did grow up in a small Irish village, Lissoy, and it seems he is recreating the memory of that place. He introduces the village as a village of peace and activity, naming the simple pleasures that could be found there: "The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love, / The matron's glance that would those looks reprove: / These were thy charms, sweet village! Sports like these," (ll. 29-31). But times in England have changed: "These were thy charms – But all these charms are fled." (l. 34). A lot of villages in England had undergone similar depopulation, and Goldsmith's travels around England had made him a first-hand witness.

Goldsmith not only laments the disappearance of rural life but also puts it in a political perspective by blaming the state. "Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;/ Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen," Notably, the state is

called a tyrant here. The use of that particular word makes it clear that Goldsmith takes a negative stance towards the state. Discourses against tyranny and despotism were already circulating in the eighteenth century, e.g. in the works of writers like Rousseau. By calling the state a "tyrant" Goldsmith takes a clear political stance, against oppression by the state.

Goldsmith's political argument is also a moral one, he criticizes the rich, and the "shapeless ruin" (l. 47) he sees in the landscape reflects the decadence produced by the pursuit of luxury. The rich gaining more and more land and the poor losing it: "The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay," (l. 266) Goldsmith openly criticizes them by naming all the trifles that the rich man uses his land for:

"The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage and hounds.
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighboring fields of half their growth"
(ll. 275-280)

Notice how the last two lines of this quotation plays with words to achieve an effect that scorns "The man of wealth and pride". The man of wealth and pride has a silken robe around its limbs, made not of cloth, but of sloth. This playful replacement of "cloth" with a rhyme-word "sloth" mocks and criticizes the rich, especially because this "Robe" contributed to the decadence of the rural villages.

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