Invasion
Choman Hardi

Apple Inc.

1st Edition
Context ........................................................................................................3
The Class Game .............................................................................................7
Initial Activity ...............................................................................................8
S.M.I.L.E. Analysis ........................................................................................9
Sample Exam Question Part A ......................................................................21
Comparison ..................................................................................................21
Sample Exam Question - Part B .................................................................22
Context - Kurds in Iraq

The Kurdish people are a group of people who inhabit the region of Kurdistan in the Middle East. Kurdistan is not a nation, and its territory is divided between the countries of Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria. Since the 19th century, there has been a strong movement for Kurdish independence and the formation of Kurdistan as a nation state. Kurds have often faced discrimination and repression from national governments; in Turkey, for example, the government has long tried to repress the Kurdish language and culture through banning the use of the language on TV and radio and banning Kurdish schools.

The northern provinces of Iraq are largely populated by Kurds, and there has been a decades-long struggle for Kurdish independence from Iraq. There was ongoing conflict between the Iraqi Kurds and the Baathist government of Saddam Hussain throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and at the start of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980 the Kurdish peshmarga (independence fighters) renewed their campaign for independence, launching a rebellion against the government in 1983.

In response, Saddam Hussain’s government launched the Anfal genocide against the Kurdish population. This lasted from 1986 to 1988, and tens of thousands - if not more - Kurdish civilians were killed.

Actions of the Anfal genocide included:
- The disappearance and systematic execution of men the Iraqi government believed to be of fighting age. When villages were invaded by Saddam’s forces, adult males and teenagers were taken to detention centres, where the majority were massacred.

- The destruction of 4,500 Kurdish villages in northern Iraq. Hospitals, schools and homes were destroyed en masse.

- A poison gas attack on the city of Halabja (March 1988) in which 4,000-5,000 Kurdish people were killed - mostly women and children.

- The exposure of around 250 villages to chemical weapons.

Following the fall of Saddam Hussain’s government after the US-led invasion in 2003, Saddam and his key operatives were put on trial for their actions in the Anfal genocide. Whilst Saddam was executed for unrelated crimes before the Anfal trial ended, his key general, Ali Hassan al-Majid (known as Chemical Ali for his use of chemical weapons against the Kurds) was executed for war crimes, along with other leading Baathist military figures.

Choman Hardi
Choman Hardi was born in Kurdistan in 1974, and is the daughter of a famous Kurdish poet, Ahmed Hardi. She was raised in both Iran and Iraq. Her education and childhood was interrupted by the violence of the time; her family returned to Iraq from Iran in 1979, one year before the start of the Iran-Iraq war.

She remembers that “my childhood, like many of my generation, is full of the sound of sirens and planes and guns. Our days were dominated by the Iran-Iraq War and our nights by Iraq’s war against the Kurdish peshmerga (fighters for independence).” Her family were again forced to leave Iraq during the Anfal genocide of 1988.

She came to England in 1993 to attend university and continued her studies to become an academic. Her research focuses upon genocide in Iraqi Kurdistan, and in particular on the experiences of the widows of the Anfal genocide of the 1980s.
Hardi has published two volumes of poetry in Kurdish, and her first collection of poetry in English was published in 2004. Her poems primarily focus upon the experiences of Kurdish people. She has tried throughout her career to raise awareness of the Anfal genocide.

Want to know more?


http://textualities.net/benjamin-morris/choman-hardi-interview/ - interesting interview with Choman Hardi about her poetry and research.

http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=qidfVsS-z8YC&pg=PA312&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false - Middle East Watch’s account of the genocide in Iraq.


http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kt5uJdNDJ6E - Video in which a journalist interviews survivors of the Anfal genocide.
Invasion

Soon they will come. First we will hear the sound of their boots approaching at dawn then they’ll appear through the mist.

In their death-bringing uniforms they will march towards our homes their guns and tanks pointing forward.

They will be confronted by young men with rusty guns and boiling blood. These are our young men who took their short-lived freedom for granted.

We will lose this war, and blood will cover our roads, mix with our drinking water, it will creep into our dreams.

Keep your head down and stay in doors – we’ve lost this war before it has begun.

Choman Hardi
Initial Activity

What kind of emotions are present in the poem?

Do you think that Hardi is writing about something in the future, or is she looking back on something that has already happened? Explain your answer.

What kind of tone does the poet create?
What could the ‘mist’ and ‘dawn’ at the start of the poem symbolise?

S.M.I.L.E. Analysis

Remember, to analyse a poem we need to look at:

- Structure
- Meaning
- Imagery (similes, metaphors, personification)
- Language
- Effect on the reader
“Meaning” is a good place to start when thinking about a poem, as here you can discuss the principal theme(s) of the poem and why you think the poet has written it.

**Meaning - Key points:**

**Exploration - Meaning**

- Here, Hardi’s poem focuses on the ongoing conflict between Saddam Hussein’s government and her own people, the Iraqi Kurds. She forecasts the destruction and massacre of her own people by the government forces, and warns that ‘we’ve lost this war before it has begun.’

- The calmness of the narrative suggests that it was not composed in a state of panic - instead, Hardi is writing from the future, and is projecting herself back in time before the invasion occurred. She has full knowledge of the horrors that are to come, and the inevitability of events is conveyed by the use of the word ‘will.’

- Throughout the poem, Hardi creates an **ominous** tone. 
explore how in later sections). However, her tone is calm and there is a sense of emotional detachment, which Hardi has said was necessary for her to be able to write about genocide at all (see her interview at http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/singlePoet.do?poetId=13036)

What emotions are present in this poem?

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

How does Hardi create a sense of foreboding and threat in the poem?

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Hardi herself has said that she needed to emotionally detach in some way in order to be able to write about genocide. What do you think she means by this, and why do you think the tone of the poem is so ‘calm’ and ‘matter of fact’?
Why do you think Hardi, writing from the future, sets the ‘present’ of the poem before the Iraqi soldiers arrive? What is the effect of this?

Structure

Structure refers to the way a poem is set out and organised. Here, you write about things like rhyme scheme, length, repetition and the flow of ideas throughout the poem.
• Hardi sets the poem in the past, just before the Baathist invasion of Kurdistan ("In their death-bringing uniforms/ they will march towards our homes/ their guns and tanks pointing forward.")

• The use of the future tense ‘will’ throughout the poem creates a sense of inevitability - these things will happen, and, given Hardi’s knowledge of the future, cannot be prevented.

• The poem begins with a short, matter of fact sentence: “Soon they will come.” Again, the ‘will’ and the short sentences create a foreboding, ominous tone; Hardi is predicting the terrible events to come.

• There is no rhyme used in the poem - it is, like many other poems in the collection, in free verse.

• Hardi uses enjambment throughout the poem e.g.

  First we will hear

  the sound of their boots approaching at dawn

**Exploration - Structure**

What is the effect of the word ‘will’ on how we see the violence of the poem?
Why do you think Hardi has written this poem in free verse?

What is the effect of enjambment in the poem?
Imagery

This is where you look at techniques such as similes, metaphors and personification. What pictures has the poet tried to create in your head?

Imagery - Key Points

- Hardi uses imagery to create a sense of foreboding and threat.

- The metaphor - ‘in their death-bringing uniforms’ emphasises the violence of the soldiers, and reinforces our sense that the death of the young men is inevitable. The depiction of the ‘uniforms’ rather than the soldiers themselves helps to anonymise and depersonalise the soldiers; they are a uniformed and organised force of violence rather than individuals.

- Hardi uses the metaphor ‘boiling blood’ to describe the young Kurdish men. This metaphor conveys their anger at the repression of the Kurds in Iraq.

- Towards the end of the poem, Hardi personifies blood, saying that it will ‘creep into our dreams.’

Exploration - Imagery

What is the effect of the personification in the phrase “blood...will creep into our dreams?” What kind of image does this give us about the violence that will occur and the effects it will have upon the population?
Language

This is where you comment on the language the poet uses. What choices has he/she made, and why?

**Key Points - Language**

- ‘Dawn’ and ‘mist’ in the first stanza are significant. They are both examples of **pathetic fallacy** (when the weather is used to represent emotions).

- ‘Dawn’ traditionally brings new hope, but in this poem it brings violence (compare to Owen’s personification of dawn in ‘Exposure’). Also, the phrase ‘it will dawn on you’ means that you will become aware of something - think about what this could mean in relation to the poem!

- ‘Mist’ generally symbolises confusion and things unknown - this could symbolise that the Kurds do not know what is about to occur. As the soldiers will ‘appear through the mist,’ the true horror of what will occur will ‘dawn’ on them.

- Hardi uses language to **depersonalise** the enemy fighters. She does not speak of them as individuals, but as an organised and threatening force. Hence we have:
  - ‘boots’ and ‘uniforms.’
• ‘guns and tanks pointing forwards’ - this suggests they are well-equipped.

• In contrast, the Kurdish fighters are poorly equipped, having only “rusty guns and boiling blood.”

• Throughout the poem, Hardi uses personal pronouns to create a division between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ The use of ‘them,’ in particular, makes the enemy appear threatening:

Soon they will come. First we will hear the sound of their boots approaching at dawn then they’ll appear through the mist.

In their death-bringing uniforms they will march towards our homes their guns and tanks pointing forward.

• Hardi uses plosive words (words beginning with a harsh ‘p,’ ‘b,’ ‘t,’ ‘d’ ‘k,’ or ‘g,’ sound) to convey the coming violence e.g. ‘boiling blood,’ ‘before it has begun.’). The use of alliteration in these phrases heightens the effect of these harsh and violent sounds.

• At the end of the poem, Hardi directly addresses a Kurd of the time, advising him / her to ‘keep your head down.’

What is the significance of ‘dawn’ and ‘mist’ in the poem?
Why do you think Hardi depersonalises the Iraqi military, describing only their uniform and weapons?

What is the effect of the use of pronouns within the poem?
What are plosive words? Can you identify two uses of plosive words in the poem and explain what their effect is?

Who do you think Hardi is addressing when she advises ‘keep your head down?’ Herself as a child? A member of her family? The Kurds in general?

Effect on the reader
How did this poem make you feel?

Why do you think Hardi chose to write about the ‘build up’ to violence rather than the violence itself? How might this relate to her own emotions and the difficulty of writing about violence?
Sample Exam Question Part A

3. a) “Explore how the writer conveys her thoughts and feelings about the coming of war in “Invasion.”

*Use evidence from the poem to support your answer.* (15 marks).

NB - This question appeared on the January 2012 examination paper. In the exam, you would have about 30 minutes to complete this question.

*Write an answer to this question and email it to me.*

Comparison

My suggested poem to compare this to would be “O What is that Sound” by W.H. Auden, as this is also about the coming of violence, and has a similar foreboding and ominous tone.

Look at the ePub on “O What is That Sound.” Fill in the following table looking at how Hardi and Auden each present the coming of war.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meanings</th>
<th>Choman Hardi - &quot;Invasion.&quot;</th>
<th>W.H. Auden - &quot;O What is That Sound?&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sample Exam Question - Part B**

*Answer EITHER 3(b)i OR 3(b)ii*

3 b) (i) *Compare how the writers explore different thoughts and feelings about the coming of war in “O What is that Sound?” and “Invasion.”*

*Use evidence from the poems to support your answer.*

*You may include material you used to answer 3(a).*
3 b) (ii) Compare how the writer of one poem of your choice from the ‘Clashes and Collisions’ collection explores different ideas about war from those in ‘Invasion’.

Use evidence from the poems to support your answer.

You may include material you used to answer 3(a).

NB - These questions appeared on the January 2012 exam paper. In the exam, you would have about 30 minutes to complete this question.

Write an answer to this question and email it to me.

Sample Answers

‘Invasion’ featured on the January 2012 examination paper, and Edexcel have provided us with a sample answer produced by a candidate.

3. a) “Explore how the writer conveys her thoughts and feelings about the coming of war in “Invasion.”

Use evidence from the poem to support your answer. (15 marks).
Question 3 a) - Maximum 15 marks.

AO2: explain how language, structure and form contribute to writers’ presentation of ideas, themes and settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>- No rewardable material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (E/D)</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>- Generally sound explanation of how the writer conveys his / her attitudes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Generally sound, relevant connection made between the presentation of attitudes and the language used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Mostly clear, relevant textual reference to support response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (D/C)</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>- Sound explanation of how the writer conveys his / her attitudes to create effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Sound, relevant connection made between attitudes and the language used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Clear, relevant textual reference to support response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (C/B)</td>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>- Thorough explanation of how the writer conveys his / her attitudes to create effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Sustained, relevant connection made between attitudes and the presentation of ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Sustained, relevant textual reference to support response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (A)</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>- Assured explanation of how the writer conveys attitudes to create effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Relevant connection made between attitudes and the presentation of ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pertinent textual reference to support response.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The writer uses a variety of language devices to convey the coming of war. A sense of inevitability is created by the use of phrases reflecting certainty. The characters know they ‘will lose this war’ and the writer portrays this fixed fate throughout the poem by using pronouns and the future tense. “They will come” and “will be” create an event which seems certain to happen leading to a foreboding atmosphere of anticipation. The knowledge that they’ve ‘lost this war before it has begun’ promotes a sorrowful feeling of acceptance. The writer seems to encourage the reader to understand that war is coming and there is no doubt. The word ‘lost’ employs thoughts of being beaten, destroyed and controlled therefore proposing that this is what war is like. The use of alliteration ‘before it has begun’ creates emphasis and rhythm, adding to the finality of war. They also plosive words therefore provide impact, foreshadowing the violence that awaits.

The use of pathetic fallacy indicates that the ‘dawn’ and ‘mist’ are just elements of the war itself; because ‘dawn’ is an inevitability, no-one can prevent the dawn from rising. Furthermore, it could connote that ‘their boots approaching at dawn’ shatters all hope. That they will take away any hope of new beginnings the characters had. ‘Mist’ implies the unknown, mystery and the supernatural. It has an eerie effect linked to the anonymity of the coming soldiers.

The use of the collective pronouns ‘they’ and ‘we’ reveals separation between the two sides. ‘They’ also sounds ominous, suspicious and distant connoting the feelings the characters had towards ‘them’ - the coming soldiers. A sense of belonging and community is inferred by the use of ‘our’ - portraying the
protective feelings that the characters have for another like they are a family. The writer does this to show their thoughts of holding together when war approaches.

Hardi insinuates the blood-thirsty and violent nature of war by the use of cacophony ‘boiling blood’ which connotes the harsh horrors of the violent acts about to happen. These plosive words stand out and are highlighted as brutal reflecting the sound they make. Connotations of blood imply violence, killing and danger. Alternatively, ‘boiling blood’ could represent the anger and hatred felt by the people being invaded. The metaphor ‘boiling blood’ is hyperbolic conveying the strong, passionate feelings of the people as their anger rises their blood boils with fury. Another perception could be that the soldiers coming are so full of blood-thirsty brutality that their blood boils madly for the slaughter of others.

Hardi suggests that war is consuming - it takes over everything. “Blood will cover our roads, mix with our drinking water, it will creep into our dreams.” This builds up to the extreme that the blood will even haunt their dreams, showing that blood is all-consuming and hungry. This is also ironic as dreams are untouchable yet ‘creep’ is a sensory word associated with touch.

Hardi portrays thoughts of inevitability and being consumed by the blind power of war as it comes.
Comparison Sample Answer

3 b) (i) Compare how the writers explore different thoughts and feelings about the coming of war in “O What is that Sound?” and “Invasion.”

Use evidence from the poems to support your answer.
You may include material you used to answer 3(a).

**Question 3b) - maximum 15 marks.**

*A03: Make comparisons and explain links between two texts.*

## Mark Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>- No rewardable material.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1 (E/D) | 1-3 | - Generally sound comparisons and links.  
- Some clear evaluation of the different ways of expressing meaning and achieving effects.  
- Selection of examples is mostly appropriate; shows some support of the points being made. |
| 2 (D/C) | 4-6 | - Sound comparisons and links.  
- Some clear evaluation of the different ways of expressing meaning and achieving effects.  
- Selection of examples is appropriate; shows some support of the points being made. |
| 3 (C/B) | 7-9 | - Specific and detailed comparisons and links.  
- Developed evaluation of the different ways of expressing meaning and achieving effects.  
- Selection of examples is detailed, appropriate and supports the points being made. |
| 4 (A) | 10-12 | - Assured comparisons and links.  
- Pertinent evaluation of the different ways of expressing meaning and achieving effects.  
- Selection of examples is assured, appropriate and supports the points being made. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5 (A*) | 13-15 | - Discriminating comparisons and links showing insight.  
- Perceptive evaluation of the different ways of expressing meaning and achieving effects.  
- Selection of examples is discriminating and fully supports the points being made. |

**Answer**

Both ‘Exposure’ and ‘Invasion’ portray war yet they contrast in the way they express this.

‘Invasion’ shows war to be barbaric and brutal, this is connoted by the regimented feel the poem creates by similar lined stanzas and plosive words such as ‘blood’ and ‘pointing.’ The use of the word ‘keep’ is imperative, demanding administrating authority likening it to a command by an army general. The metaphor ‘death-bringing uniforms’ shows that the soldiers are carriers or death and the use of personification implies that this sense of death is omitted from the uniforms alone. The word ‘death’ is cacophonic - sharp and harsh with connotations of loss, fear and finality. An inevitability is shown - death will come it will ‘march towards our homes.’ Death cannot literally march into homes but it will take lives and obliterate family life and its presence will be felt vividly in the home.

Whereas, ‘Exposure’ presents another side of war, which is more subtle and could be perceived as more deadly. Although like ‘Invasion’ there is a sense of waiting and anticipation it has no inevitability. It is the opposite, the outcome is unknown.
They expect war to take them however it doesn’t come and the weather slowly and gradually disposes of them. Examples of their persistent waiting are ‘keep awake’ and ‘worried by silence’ which reveal their struggle and fear of the silence. Owen wants the readers to understand that the unknown is twice as deadly as the certain. The refrain ‘but nothing happens’ shows the silence and the waiting process which the soldiers face, yet they are almost trapped by it, unable to become free of this waiting.

Personification is used: “mad gusts of tugging on the wire,” indicating that the wind is ‘tugging’ on the transient wire of life. Emotive language is also used to portray ‘twitching agonies of men’ suggesting the pain and suffering the waiting of the war ‘incessantly’ enforces upon them. Pathetic fallacy reveals the quiet sadness the soldiers feel as the ‘poignant misery of dawn begins to grow.’ Dawn is used in ‘Invasion’ to signify hope which is taken away. In ‘Exposure’ dawn is just another element bringing with it more waiting and frustration. However, this is all the soldiers know that “only...war lasts” - they do not recognise that “rain soaks” and “the clouds sag stormy” are conditions that can kill them with equal brutality.

Unlike “Invasion” which is more hard-hitting, “Exposure” is soporific and soft in the way it presents fear. The juxtaposition of “snow-dazed” and “sun-dozed” show the gentleness of hope and how the elements are lulling them into a final sleep. Natural imagery is used to create a heavenly sort of atmosphere at times - “littered with blossoms” - this conveys peace, safety and beauty. Although the weather is destroying them it still has a kind of beauty about it which war does not.
What the examiner gave it - 15/15, Band 5.

Please note that because this is a **higher paper**, the marks available are between A* and D. If the candidate performed at the same level across the whole paper, they would be looking at a grade A*.

The examiner said: “the choice of ‘Exposure’ for the second poem enables the candidate to make a wide range of relevant comparisons and links with ‘Invasion’. The comment is perceptive and shows excellent control. When the answer turns to ‘Exposure’, it shows equal conviction in the handling of the sense of ‘waiting’, which is one idea that certainly links the poems. The interpretation shows acute awareness and imagination: an exemplary response.”