

**Sample Question A****Leaving Certificate Higher Level 2007****Text 2**

**(i) Virginia Woolf described London in 1930 as a “city alive”. In your own words, outline the aspects of the city that impressed her most. (15)**

Virginia Woolf described London as a “city alive”. I will now discuss some of the aspects of the city which I believe impressed her most.

Firstly, I believe that Woolf was greatly impressed by the sheer magnitude of the city and the way in which London appeared to have everything. I feel that Woolf saw London as having all the aspects one would imagine and expect in a city such as churches, spires, domes, factories and she appeared to be somewhat awestruck as these buildings appeared all at once, side by side: “...the domes swell and church spires, while with age, mingle with the tapering, pencil-shaped chimneys of factories”.

Secondly, I feel that Woolf was equally impressed by the energy and activity that she perceived the city to contain. She noticed the ships lying beneath the warehouses, the hoisting barrels, the jostling lorries and the cart houses distributing wool. It seems that everywhere Woolf looked there was life and activity: “...the hoisting of barrels, sacks and crates, the lorries jostling in the narrow lanes to shift the wool that the cart horses struggle to distribute”.

Thirdly, I believe that the aesthetic of the city also impressed Woolf. Architectural features of the city such as St. Paul’s cathedral at that time dominated London’s skyline and this appears to have impressed Woolf greatly. Woolf described this as “splendour” and “architectural grandeur”.

Virginia Woolf certainly saw London as a “city alive”. In the above answer, I have discussed the aspects of the city which I feel expressed Woolf the most.

**(ii) Monica Ali uses a number of vivid images to portray the modern city of London. Select three that you consider particularly effective and explain why. (15)**

Monica Ali uses many images to portray the modern city of London. I will now outline three of those images and explain why I feel that they are effective.

I particularly enjoyed the way in which Ali used personification to describe the river. It is effective in that it makes the point that the river is the only aspect of the city that does not appear as lively. This may be because of the sinister effect that the world of business is having on the natural environment around it. This image also helps to create a visual image in one's head and allows one to imagine London, even if one has never been there before: "...only the river refuses to sparkle in the sun. It is resolutely doggedly brown".

I believe the simile that Ali uses to describe the way of life of the office workers is very effective. Ali effectively uses the simile to depict how fake and vacuous the interactions between the office workers are to the reader: "These fake meetings with folders offered like excuses reflect today's world of modern commerce".

Ali uses both personification and a metaphor when she describes London as a "thirsty, ravenous city". Using this image she successfully conveys to the reader how new modern London is scattered with many fast food outlets and eateries, all aiming at enticing the busy shoppers or office workers.

In the text, Ali used a number of different images. I have stated three which I personally found to be very effective.

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