# External Assessment – Annotated Comparative Text Response C+ Sample

***Compare how director Jordan Peele employs literary and filmic techniques in Get Out and Us to exhibit his central ideas.***

Director Jordan Peele in his respective films has employed a variety of filmic and literary devices to exhibit a different stance on social issues that exist in modern America. The film *Get Out* follows the perspective of African American male named Chris Washington when visiting his white girlfriend Rose’s parents. Within the conservative context, Chris is denoted as unsettled by the unorthodox and bizarre actions of his counterparts whom are paranormally controlled by the Caucasian community. In the film *US* the director follows the story of Adelaide Wilson – both her past and present which is accompanied by her husband, son and daughter. Within the abstract text, the family are confronted by a doppelganger group known as the ‘tethered,’ headed by Adelaide’s counterpart Red – who endeavours to slay the family and claim their lifestyle. In modern settings, it is become evident that prejudice occurs, not only between races, but also within cultures. Thereby, Peele expresses his concerns regarding black civic lives in America - especially the challenges associated with remaining true to oneself or kowtowing to patriarchal constructs. Through his use of a number for literary and stylistic techniques, the director Jordan Peele’s respective films are pertinent reminders in modern society as issues with the black lives matter protest emerge and demands for tolerance reverberate.

Contextually, it is through the director’s employment of literary and filmic techniques that the hierarchical context of America, both past and present is critiqued as being subjective and polarising. In *Us* this is demonstrated as antagonist Red inclusively states, “We are Americans,” which manifests as ironic as within the patriarchal context there is little equality aside from nationality. Furthermore, Peele uses to simple premise of ‘US’ as a metaphor of the context and culture of blacks lives in today’s society, which resonates with modern viewers. The text thereby becomes a political statement against Trump’s America and the concern of minorities being able to prosper within the conservative Republican environment. In comparison, in *Get Out* the film is created to show the audience the effect of culturally repressed anxiety of being either part of a minority groups or being ostracised within one’s own community. Peele attempts to show the audience the thinking inside the mind of a black person in an interracial relationship meeting their significant other for the first time. In *Get Out* it shows the how there are elements of dehumanization when you can only see colour and not the whole person. An example of this was seen when Rose’s parents throw a party and the white party goers muse over the skin colour of the protagonist, stating “black is in fashion,” making the protagonist feel marginalised and awkward. Contrastingly, in *Us* Peel utilised the concept of the ‘tethered’ to suggest that even within cultures there is a plight and conflict that pits humans against each other. As an allegory the doppelgangers denote that culture within western societies are coerced to clash in order to provide for their families. Viewers identify that such isolation can happen in modern society and Peele tries to show the audience the effect in the eyes of the main character to the audience. The enduring of social criticism for Chris dose not cease until his friend, another African American is able to save him from the conservative environment. Each text functions as a metafictional inference to Barack Obama winning his presidency; thereby Peele makes a political statement about the socio-cultural limitation of Trump’s America. It is made apparent to viewers that both texts consider America’s misplaced fear of the unfamiliar and outsiders. This is exemplified when the metaphor towards the mystery invader. Whether the mystery invader is used as a to kill the characters, take American jobs or the faction that Americans don’t leave near that voted a different way. The contextual rise of Donald Trump’s sovereignty evokes a concern for the survival of African Americans within the biased setting.

In his films Peele highlights the differing notions of racism that occurs in America in *Get Out* and social oppression in *Us*. Peele shows the unjust treatment and exercise of power used against black people in today’s society through his use of various literary and filmic techniques. In *Get Out*, the unjust treatment and exercise of power used against black people is used as the main theme of the motion-picture. Additionally, in his film Peele does not manifest a stereotypical horror film with a black protagonist dying as soon as the film starts, he employs much more complex layering to his feature. Everybody there, from the protagonist’s parents to Mary’s white friends and neighbours to her family’s dark-skinned workers, are acting abnormally. Progressively dubious and frightened, Chris inevitably succumbs to a network wide plot to steal individuals of colour – subsequently collapsing and influencing their minds with those of more established white people in a horrendous selective breeding analysis. The protagonist’s motivation becomes escape by whatever methods available, which in *Get Out's* case implies open brutality – which is a concept lauded by modern Americans. This view stretches out, generally, to our mainstream society, as well: Peel critiques the premise of emerging threads which support the use of violence through war and conflict, as well as media based depictions and video game violence. In contrast, the film *Us* is not a text that criticises racism, rather it considers the social suppression of human being across and within cultures. The abstract doppelgangers that counter Adelaide’s family are portrayed by the director as limited in their ability to communicate, as denoted through their monosyllabic phrases “be careful” and “We’re Americans.” This voiceless is a reflection of sub-cultures and minorities within modern setting being quashed by their own communities. Peele suggests to viewers that it is due to this repression of human beings that such individuals resort to violence as the only way of having their opinions heard. Similar to the fear established in *Get Out* Peele uses this premise to critique social norms within a flawed society as the idea of fear permeates both pieces as Chris and Adelaide are respectively threatened by their seemingly conventional environments.

Differently, Peel considers the idea of the human condition in *Get Out*, though in *Us* he examines the premise that human beings are the greatest threat to themselves through sound editing, metaphor and camera shots. Namely, Peele uses recurring motif to show the idea that human beings are the greatest threat to themselves and chiefly this occurs through the pain and fear are all ideas of human condition that are conveyed through the characterisation of the protagonist. Both camera shots and sound editing is employed by the directors when the protagonist is hypnotised from the cup of tea. This shows viewers the innate fractures within the human condition of many conservative westerners lacking direction and thereby condemn others, as Mary’s dad Dean Armitage states “In life. What is your purpose?” The tea manifesting as emblematic of slavery and the mistreatment of black African Americans. When the protagonist Chris is getting hypnotised the camera angle allows the audience to see the feeling of pain and fear in his eyes. As the camera gets closer and closer towards Chris it allows the audience to see his emotion and the idea of his human existence. The use of diegetic sounds was used through the stirring of the teacup. When hearing the noise Chris becomes fearful of being controlled – which is an idea that marginalised audiences will be able to sympathise with. Peele employed these sound effects to engage the audience and help allow the audience to experience the emotions that Chris was feeling. Analogously, in *US* it is via a metaphor that Adelaide uses to explain their dilemma is “They won’t stop until they kill us, or we kill them,” that viewers are challenged to consider the plight of modern Americans. This inclusive phrasing is implemented as a way to communicate the social challenges that exist within modern western culture as consumers are pitted against each other economically. Moreover, it is the superficial nature of humankind that is also examined as Peele denotes that modern society is tested by each other’s demands to look and act per the demands of patriarchal structures. Superficially, each of the texts are mediums created by Peele to denote the socio-cultural hardships of modern settings.

It is through the directors’ utilisation of symbolism and other techniques that the director Peels is able to examine the idea of duplicitousness and dehumanisation, which occurs subsequent to the social or economic status of a person. In *Get Out*, contextually, white individuals are depicted as apparently harmless and appear to be friendly and accommodating, an extended metaphor for socio-economic manipulation and propaganda in the United States and capitalistic cultures. Anecdotally, it is during a nursery party attended by wealthy white individuals that the protagonist is beleaguered and harassed by the attendees, “fair skin has been in favour for what, the past hundreds of years?” who are exposed to viewers as inhumane. It is during their critiquing of Chris that it is revealed that the antagonists are evaluating the nature and quality of his body parts that are going to be set on an exacting bidding station. Indeed, even his profound qualities, similar to his masterful ability, are expressly separated into externalized physical parts; his ability as a photographer gets decreased to his imaginative "eyes," which are commodified as a product, like the rest of his body. The remarks Chris suffers from the buyers contrast common decency creating feelings of hypocrisy with the whits culture; as the men and women implement “purchaser requests” from a horrendous procession of customers investigating the new “merchandise.” Comparably, *Get Out* depicts the partygoers' "[benevolent] bigotry” as what it really may be; a spread for an arrangement of dehumanization. This idea of being dehumanised and a victim of socio-economic status is implemented symbolically by Peele in *Us.* Adelaide’s son Evan is portrayed as wearing a wolf mask which functions as a metaphor to create a social parallel with the more affluent people his family are friends with. In juxtaposition, his Doppelganger Pluto wear his mask to shield his burnt face, which is a feature that polarises him from a superficial western culture. Moreover, examination of socio-economic status being a defining feature in western context is explored through the director’s use of symbols of affluence – which are used to defend against the “tethered.” It is through a “golf club,” a “speed boat” and a piece of “artwork” – all emblems of prosperity – that members of the tethered are killed, while in contest the tethered are only armed with their natural fighting skill and sharp scissors. Viewers identify that the recurring motif of these actions are indicative of those struggling fiscally being condemned by society’s middle and upper classes. It is also suggested by Peel that the patriarchal, capitalist context of the United States functions to repress those who are leading lives ostracised by their social status.

Using a number for literary and filmic techniques, the director of *Get Out* and *Us* Jordan Peele is able to communicate his concerns regarding modern America. The target audiences of viewers living in modern America or western settings are coerced to consider the inherent and social implications that fear permeates throughout modern times – which chiefly results in trepidation, apartheid and intolerance. The plight of the respective protagonist’s function to illuminate relatable feelings, which can be emulated by viewers as they contemplate the social-cultural issues that create a divide amongst nations and countries.

***Words – 1918***

**Knowledge and Understanding – High C**

The response demonstrates a sound understanding of the central themes in *Get Out* and *Us*, particularly race, social oppression, and fear in modern America. The essay recognizes that Peele critiques systemic racism and social hierarchies, with a strong emphasis on how African Americans are marginalized in both films. The discussion of *Get Out*’s exploration of race relations and *Us*’s depiction of class struggle shows engagement with Peele’s political commentary.

However, the discussion is sometimes overly generalized or lacks precision. For instance, while the response correctly links *Us* to class divisions, the explanation of the doppelgängers as “a plight and conflict that pits humans against each other” could be more specific. Instead, the response could highlight how the Tethered represent America’s overlooked underclass, forced to live in subhuman conditions while the privileged remain oblivious to their suffering. A more nuanced discussion of Peele’s commentary on economic disparity and systemic neglect would strengthen the argument. Additionally, some claims are either weakly justified or slightly misinterpreted. The statement that *Get Out* functions as a “metafictional inference to Barack Obama winning his presidency” lacks clear textual evidence. If the intent was to discuss how *Get Out* explores the false notion of a “post-racial” America, it should be explicitly stated and supported with examples, such as the Armitage family’s performative liberalism—claiming they would have “voted for Obama a third time”—while still engaging in racial exploitation.

**Analysis – High C**

The essay correctly identifies several important literary and filmic techniques, including symbolism, irony, sound design, and cinematography. Some strong analytical moments appear, such as the discussion of the tea cup in *Get Out* symbolizing control and historical oppression.

However, the analysis is inconsistent and sometimes lacks depth. For instance, the essay briefly mentions the irony in Red’s statement, “We are Americans,” but does not fully explore its significance. A stronger analysis would explain how Peele uses irony to critique American nationalism—while Red’s words suggest inclusion, the Tethered’s existence reflects extreme social exclusion and suffering. The film suggests that America’s prosperity is built on the oppression of an invisible underclass. Additionally, while the essay mentions symbolism in *Us*, it does not fully examine the significance of the Hands Across America reference, which is crucial to the film’s message. Instead of only mentioning the Tethered’s plight in general terms, the response could analyse how the 1986 charity campaign (which Adelaide remembers) symbolizes America’s tendency to offer empty gestures of unity rather than real systemic change.

Moreover, the essay could provide a stronger discussion of cinematography. For example, in *Get Out*, Peele employs close-ups and point-of-view shots to immerse the audience in Chris’s discomfort, such as during the silent auction scene, where the camera lingers on Chris’s confused and uncomfortable expression while the white guests bid on him in sign language. Similarly, in *Us*, the mirrored shots between Adelaide and Red during their final confrontation emphasize their duality and reinforce the film’s central twist – of the heroine switching places. These filmic choices should be analysed more explicitly to show a stronger understanding of how Peele conveys meaning visually.

**Application – Low B**

The response attempts to compare the two films, but the comparative structure is not always effective. The connections between *Get Out* and *Us* are sometimes forced or unclear. Instead of broadly stating that both films explore racism, the essay should highlight their distinct approaches: EG: *Get Out* focuses on racial exploitation within a seemingly progressive society, using horror tropes to expose microaggressions and systemic violence. And *Us* examines economic inequality and self-identity, presenting horror as a reflection of internalized fear and societal division.

There are some strong comparative moments, such as the discussion of Peele’s protagonists both being trapped in environments that appear safe but turn deadly. However, the transitions between films are sometimes abrupt, and some ideas are repeated unnecessarily. The mention of Trump’s America appears multiple times but is not always meaningfully expanded. Instead of reiterating that the films critique conservative politics, the response should differentiate their critiques, for example, *Get Out* exposes the hypocrisy of liberal racism, while *Us* suggests that economic inequality exists across political lines.

Moreover, while the essay provides some textual evidence, it could use more varied examples from both films. For example, rather than repeating the tea cup hypnosis scene in *Get Out*, the response could explore another key moment - such as when Chris takes a photo of Logan (the only other Black man at the party), triggering Logan’s breakdown, highlighting the contrast between forced assimilation and suppressed identity. Similarly, in *Us*, the response could analyse how Peele subverts the horror trope of the “final girl” through Adelaide. Unlike traditional horror heroines, Adelaide is not simply fighting off external threats - she is also fighting the consequences of her own past actions.