

## H2 Literature Paper 1 CA

Q1. Write a critical comparison of the following poems. Pay close attention to the ways in which language, style and form contribute to each poet's portrayal of endurance.

In Roy Campbell's 'The serf' (Poem A) and R. S. Thomas' 'A peasant', the respective personae are presented as individuals under severe and harsh conditions, and having to endure the pain and suffering brought about by the environment in which they work in. The poignant language and imagery used in poem A conveys the extent of suffering endured by the persona, thus bringing about a sense of pain and sympathy for him. However, Thomas' presentation of his persona's, Iago Prytherch, endurance of hardship is slightly more indirect. The effective use of imagery and language techniques help to underline the repulsiveness of Iago's features, thus suggesting how the harsh environment and conditions have contributed to his current appearance, thus signalling the level of endurance undertaken by Iago. Both poems also have a significant change in tone towards the end, thus causing one to consider the idea that such immense levels of endurance will empower the oppressed individuals, making them stronger.

Thorough, impressive, sensitive to poetic method.

Both poets employ the effective use of language to enhance the harsh and desolate conditions faced by their respective personae. In poem A, the fact that the persona is working in an environment of 'torrid mist' and 'smoke' serves to directly convey the unpleasant and grim conditions that he is subject to. Furthermore, the description of the persona as being 'naked' suggests his level of vulnerability and defencelessness with regard to his harsh environment, thus heightening the level of endurance that he has to go through in order to survive. Also, the fact that he is 'clothed in the torrid mist' conveys the idea that the unpleasant environment of suffering is now part of his life and all around him. As such, we as the reader are compelled to feel utmost sympathy for the persona, and this level of sympathy is enhanced with the fact that he is also said to be a <sup>slow</sup> somnambulist, that illustrates lethargy which is also emphasised with the use of alliteration. We are also made to feel the bleakness and intensity of the persona's pain with Campbell's use of words with long vowels, 'deeply', 'long' to describe his emotions, thus causing us to feel for his endurance. Similarly, Thomas' effective play on language also helps to illustrate the level of endurance faced by the persona, Iago Prytherch. His home is in the 'bald Welsh hills', and the use of the word 'bald' suggests a level of desolation and barrenness of his environment, thus showing the extent of what he has to endure. The words used to describe Iago's <sup>appearance</sup>, such as 'chipping', 'half-witted' and 'cracks' conveys

a sense of brokenness, thus suggesting that the harsh environment that Iago is living is slowly breaking him, and this also indirectly emphasises the level of endurance he has to go through. As such, we as a reader are also made to feel sympathetic for Iago, as like the persona in poem A the harsh and desolate conditions is soon becoming a huge part of his life, and even his appearance is now even reflective of his environment.

Also, similar to poem B, there is a sense of lethargy surrounding Iago, as a result of his huge level of endurance and enduring. He is described as 'motionless' at night, 'except when he leans to gob in the fire'. The use of the word 'except' illustrates the limitations in his movement, thus heightening the sense of fatigue and lethargy, and this makes us sympathise with Iago even more. Ultimately, the effective use of language in both poems in describing the persona and their environment serves to suggest the huge link between man and his environment, and despite the desolation it poses, a man can and will endure to any extent to stay alive.

There is also an effective use of imagery utilised in both poems to illustrate the interconnectedness between the endurance of harsh circumstances and the strength of the human mind. In poem A, Campbell makes use of both agricultural and military imagery, 'Red clod' and 'war cry', 'tribal spears' and 'fatal sheaves of corn'. The use of both types of imagery concurrently conveys the intricate link between endurance and strength, with the agriculture imagery representing the harsh life having to be endured by the persona, and the military imagery representing the strength that comes about as a result of this endurance. Furthermore, the fact that the respective use of imagery appears on the same line emphasises this link. Therefore, it causes the reader to slightly change their perception on the

persona, from one that is largely sympathetic to one with respect and even admiration, as we see that one is able to grow stronger when enduring hardships and suffering; and that though he is physically suffering, his mental state remains relatively strong, even 'war-like'.

Thomas in poem B also employs the use of imagery to illustrate the interconnectedness between endurance and strength, but in slight contrast to poem A, he makes use of repulsive imagery, followed by military imagery. Initially, Thomas utilises rather repulsive

imagery to describe Iago Pythorch with him having 'chipping green skin' and a 'half-witted grin' and 'his clothes, sour with years of sweat'. These words create images of disgust and disdain in the minds of the reader, that may cause us to initially reject Iago as a result of his repulsiveness. However, there is soon a change in imagery nearing the end of the poem. Though Thomas initially illustrates Iago's ghastly appearance, he seems to counteract it by illustrating that he is able to endure the 'seige' of rain and the

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'winds' attrition' upon an 'impregnable force'. Therefore, his use of military and war-related images in the later stages of the poem can be seen as reflective of Iago's inner strength, despite his repulsive external features. It can be interpreted as a means by which Thomas not only shows the link between enduring harsh circumstances and strength, but also to show that one should not judge another simply by his looks. The significant change in imagery illustrates that the harsh conditions are what makes him practice endurance, thus resulting in him becoming a stronger person. Therefore, we are made to question our initial views on Iago, and despite his repulsive appearance, within him still lies strength and endurance that is admirable.

The ending of both poems are particularly poignant as they seem to serve as a means to foreshadow what might happen to these oppressed individuals who have to endure such negative circumstances. In poem A, there is a significant change in tone towards the end of the poem. The initial dreary tone of the poem, with constant references to the persona's 'deep wounds' and 'Long... share of insults torn' is soon replaced by a more prophetic tone, in which the 'surlly patience of the self' will eventually 'plough down palaces, and thrones, and towers'. This change in tone is rather significant as not only does it end the poem on a determined note, it also serves to suggest the possibility of a future uprising and ultimately, destruction, as a result of the suppression felt by the persona, and the level of hardship that he has to endure. The use of the word 'surlly' indicates discontent and unhappiness, thus making a retaliation all the more possible. Furthermore, the repetition of 'and' in the last line gives the ending an even more powerful and dramatic effect, as it illustrates the scale in which the destruction may occur, which is a threatening and scary thought. Ultimately, ending seemingly serves to convey the message that there is a limit to how much one can endure, and that if suffering gets out of hand and intolerable, the oppressed may rise up against their circumstances. (Another way of reading the ending, not that I disagree with you or anything!)

There is a similar shift in tone in poem B, from a more descriptive tone to a more declarative tone, which is enhanced by the change in imagery. Thomas moves from describing Iago as a man with repulsive features such as 'a half-witted grin' and 'fightening' to then stating this is (Not) 'your prototype', coupled with the switch towards military imagery, as discussed above. With this change in imagery, the ending thus adopts a more declarative tone, as if to proclaim to the masses that Iago is more than he seems, and that we as readers should not judge him solely by his appearance. Furthermore, like poem A, the supposed power that Iago now possesses as a result of his endurance is conveyed in the last line of the poem, 'Enduring like a tree under the curious stars'. This line is of rather great poignancy, as not only does it give end a dramatic feel, like the ending in poem A, the use

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of the word 'stars' is also rather significant. This powerful image almost seems to suggest the size and power of the harsh elements surrounding the man, and emphasises the struggle that would be required to combat it. However, Iago is still 'enduring like a tree', thus illustrating the level of strength and resistance that he has towards his surroundings. This, coupled with the declarative tone of the ending could be seen as a means used by Thomas to proclaim that this man has the strength to rise up against his suffering, which in turn foreshadows a sense of incoming threat, similar to that of poem A.

and that this is admirable?

In conclusion, both poems seem to convey the message that one should not underestimate the power of oppressed individuals, and although they may seem weak on the outside, they have actually garnered inner strength as a result of their endurance, that may eventually pose as a prelude to a more destructive force which may arise later on.

Not entirely sure about your conclusion; my approach was to read the more ambivalent ending to A (in my view) in the light of B, that is to see the serf as a 'winner' who ploughs through the arduous & majestic too.

~~Remarkable~~ An enjoyable, proficient analysis and comparison of both poems, with the tone and language paragraphs deserving particular commendation. More detailed elaboration & analysis in some parts and a rousing conclusion (you 'used up' the gd stuff in your intro but it's worth restating the poets' likely intent (purpose, not just what is in the poem!)) please. 😊

P.S. Try to say sthg about how both poems are  
mono-stanzaic + maybe when you look at the shifts in tone?

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Sarah Soo

Write a critical comparison of the following poems. Pay close attention to ways in which language, style and form contribute to each poet's portrayal of endurance.

Both Poem A and Poem B are centered on the theme of endurance. Through their respective language, style and form, both poems are presented as rather dark and slightly harrowing. Poem A describes the suffering of a black slave, pressing on towards a chance of freedom and revenge. It reminds us of the struggle and sufferings due to inequality and the revenge sought by those who do. On the other hand, poem B describes the hardships of a peasant and his almost repulsive qualities. Yet it raises how he deserves our respect despite it, as the very essence of human nature is to suffer.

*Where'd you get this idea? 'Crimson furrow'???*  
*Awk.*  
*Awk.*  
*Post-script: Intro is thankfully the weakest part of the essay.*

Both poems are presented in a third person perspective and this leads to a rather detached effect between the persona and the main character of the poem. Added to that, the titles of both poems A and B - "The Serf" and "A Peasant" - are extremely impersonal, supporting and emphasizing the effect of the use of the third person perspective. However Poem A begins with "His naked skin", and the intimate tone conveyed by "naked skin" is slightly incongruent and disorienting. Added to that, the persona describes the serf's "heart" as "deeply wounded" by his "share of insult torn", resulting in a slightly oxymoronic effect. This contrast continues as the persona dwells on the inner turmoil faced by the serf in the opening lines, fulfilling the purpose of getting us to sympathize with his plight and respect his strength and endurance to an even greater extent. On the other hand, Poem B begins with the full name of the main character - "Iago Prytherch", seemingly an opening to a personal portrayal and depiction of him to contrast the title. Yet it carries on describing him as an "ordinary man" and continues to depict his dull daily routine. This lackluster and distant portrayal of him, added to the contrast between the addressing him by his full name and simply by a generic title further emphasizes the perceived distance between the narrator and him. We do not, at least at the beginning, sympathize with him at all unlike the unnamed character in Poem A.

*Analyse in more detail...*  
*Ok.. How so?*  
*How so?*  
*Good comparison here.*

Both poems differ in diction and tone. However they essentially present their main characters in the same high esteem, which Poem A does from the beginning while Poem B shifted to do so after putting down the peasant. In Poem A, the speaker is almost apprehensive about the serf he speaks of. He is described as one with "naked skin clothed in the torrid mist", whose "heart" is "deeply" "wound[ed]". The attention to the pain and agony the serf suffers is highlighted by these words punctuated the forceful, heavy sounds made by the numerous plosive "d"s. This builds a slow and somber tone that draws our attention to the weight of what the serf has to constantly endure. In fact is further emphasized when it is stated he drives a "slow somnambulist, and when he walks, it is a "slow progress[ion] of" "strides". Even his actions are explicitly described as "slow" repeatedly. Added to that, his "timeless, surly patience" moves nearest to the "naked earth" and "ploughs down". The verb "plough" connotes a sort of heaviness that cannot be shaken off or escaped from and the plodding, mournful tone that is developed as a result is enhanced further. The repetition of the word "naked" in reference to his skin and the earth is also noteworthy. It associates him

*You should analyse word choice at some point!*  
*inacc.*

*Why, why, why?*

with dirt, the ground – things that are hard, solid and unchanging regardless of the pressure placed upon them. Furthermore, high register is significant as it glorifies him to a certain extent, referring to him as a warrior with diction such as “war-cry” and “spears”. The diction and tone merge to present the serf in a respectful manner in the way the persona sees him. Despite his circumstance, the serf commands our admiration with his dignified demeanor and the persona seems almost afraid of him to some extent; fueled by his incomprehension that the serf can still be dignified through his suffering. On the other hand, ~~the persona~~ in Poem B the persona seems to mock “Iago Prytherch” as he is continuously put down. After he is introduced, the persona immediately inserts, snidely, “though, be it allowed”. Added to that, he is referred to as “Just an ordinary man”. The former phrase demeans him, purposely extinguishing our respect for him as he is presented as controlled by something or someone. Furthermore, the word “Just” lowers him even further as his measure is decreased in the eyes of the persona and thus the eyes of the reader as well. He is described to have “a half-witted grin” with a “vacancy of his mind” and he has “spittled mirth”. This removes any notion of intelligence that we would expect from a human being and the persona goes one step further to compare his behavior as associated with “animal contact”, a far cry from the “timeless” “patience” of the serf and his dignity. The effect of these choices of words removes any form of humanity in Prytherch and he is completely dehumanized in the eyes of the reader. However, despite this debasing portrayal, he is still presented as, similar to the serf in Poem B, a warrior. He has stood “against the siege” of wind and rain and preserves his “impregnable fortress”, a “winner of wars”. These diction associated with military are of a high register, according him recognition for his endurance of the elements, despite his obtuseness. Thus while both poems utilize different tones and diction for some parts of the poem, they essentially present both men in high esteem for their work and endurance of suffering.

What for?  
Don't let the question  
of endurance!  
escape you.

underline for emphasis.

good comparison!

(Expression issues)

Good para.

The differing imagery in both poems aided in emphasizing the depth of suffering and endurance both characters faced. In Poem A, the images associated with death a repeated several times. “Somnambulist”, while it does not directly refer to death, brings to mind unconsciousness, almost like the living dead. With his patience described as “timeless, surly”, it further emphasizes the notion of his lifeless state. Added to that, images of the “toppled clods and falling flowers” also bring to mind destruction, death and end, which have a dash of violence and gore splashed on with the words “crimson” and “red” to further intensify the harrowed imagery. The sibilant “s” sounds that are rampant in the poem with regards to these images evoke our auditory senses as it highlights the motif of death and morbidity. Furthermore our tactile senses are evoked as we almost seem to feel the pain he constantly endures that has caused him to enter this unfeeling, numbed state. On the other hand, while Poem A describes the hardships that the serf endures with passion and morbid feeling, Poem B presents the pain and suffering that the peasant endures as hard and rigid. He had to “churn the crude earth” to a “stiff” sea of clods under the “gaunt sky”, where the sun had to fight to shine through “cracks” in the sky. These images bring to mind cold, grim weather in a desolate environment. Our tactile senses are evoked again as we get a feel of the hopelessness and hard pain he feels constantly, in comparison to the sharp, stinging pain connoted in Poem A. Added to that, he is “sour with years of sweat”; this incites much disgust

Go back to 'WHY' the serf is presented in this way - tribute? - effect on reader?

Link to B?

Attitude / effect not clear (not w/ passion?)

possible point of comparison  
passion mood in A.

from us as we can almost smell him and his stench from working in this grim environment for years. However, towards the end of the poem, the pattern of imagery shifts. He is described to stand "against siege" of the natural elements and is "not to be stormed even in death's confusion". Prytherch, despite his slowness of mind and revolting impression, has conquered so much in his suffering, even death, when it comes, much like the serf. He is presented as "the winner of wars"; "enduring" like a tree under the "curious stars". Right at the end of the poem, he is presented as a hero, a victor. There images of a strong, resilient tree basking under the warm image of a thousand stars is juxtaposed to the previous images he is presented in. He is no longer grim and unfeeling, but strong, sturdy and respected.

Thus in conclusion, both poems present their own recounts of different forms and spheres of suffering and different impressions of these forms. Poem A presents the serf as a vengeful force, coming to find justice for what he has endured. While Poem B presents the peasant as while a distasteful character, yet harmless and deserving of our respect and esteem for what he has stood against and endured, much like Poem A. Initially, one might not comprehend the innate similarities between the poems, especially after comparing the regal dignity of the serf compared to the slightly repulsive peasant. However they are really not that different, after much study, and are both indispensable in educating us on their admirable strength.

A proficient response and comparison (worth commendation again in parenthesis) of ideas & effects. Analysis of form is weaved quite seamlessly but if I could nitpick, rhythm should also be considered — particularly for B's closing lines. The 'slowing' of pace — note enjambement — adds to the reverent tone that the poem ends on. Nice to see you return to form. OK, as in 'on form' not poetic form :)

34  
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Both poems present largely similar perspectives on the nature and process of endurance. Stylistically, there are striking similarities between the language, style and form in the two poems, and thus, both poems construct a grim, bleak and agonizing vision of the struggles and endurance of the two ordinary, lower-class men, who are subject of the respective poems. In epitomizing the endurance of suffering through the 'Serf' and 'Peasant', both poems ultimately seek to extol and glorify the act of silent, continual endurance in the face of harsh and brutal adversity, especially for those who are relegated to the lower rungs of society and thus, subjected a life of hardship. Hence, it can be argued that the poems are intended tributes to pay respect to and glorify the endurance of the common men in society.

Good intro.

The titles of both poems speak volumes about the perspective of the persona and intended purpose of the poems. 'The Serf' and 'A Peasant' are both refer to some people from the lowest class of society, who hold menial jobs with little riches, no privileges and are fated for a life of hardship. The titles connote a sense of suffering, hardship a lack of intellectual ability, which are consistent throughout both poems, and thus may create an expectation to experience the rugged and difficult life of the underprivileged 'Serf' or 'Peasant', inducing a tinge of sympathy among readers. Also, both poems adopt the third-person perspective in which the persona observes the 'Serf' and 'Peasant' in their lives, which enables the poet to extol the determined endurance of both men at the penultimate line of the poems, referring to the peasant as a "winner of wars" and the serf as capable of ploughing down "palaces, and thrones, and towers." In essence, the subject of both poems are physical representations of all 'Serfs', 'Peasants' and the underprivileged in society, with the purpose of glorifying the endurance of hardship and suffering of the common people through them.

Link to perspective and initial attitude / tone.

gd overview para.

Imagery is used in similar ways to create almost parallel effects. In Poem A, Campbell's crude and lurid images of the "naked skin" under the "torrid mist" engage the tactile and visual senses of the reader, evoking a sense of physical suffering and pain. The vision of a "slow somnambulist" also implies immense fatigue and stress. These connotations and feelings evoke a heart-wrenching sympathy in the reader for the suffering Serf, as it emphasizes the continual endurance of the Serf under tough, brutal conditions. Similarly for Poem B, Thomas also uses crude, but also more naturalistic imagery to depict the Peasant's struggles. The image of "green skin" and "yellow bones" subtly imply a sense of decay with regard to the Peasant, whereas the "sun that cracks the cheeks" and clothes that are "sour with years of sweat" reinforce the idea of a continued, long-period of endurance under the harsh conditions of nature. This achieves an almost

Some distance' b/w character & speaker



parallel effect with Poem A, evoking in the reader sympathy and pity for the peasant. Furthermore, the shift in the imagery towards the end of both poems is highly similar, with both poets exhibiting grandiose and majestic images of "palaces, and thrones, and towers" and "an impregnable fortress", which connote strength, resilience and achievement, to extol and praise the endurance of both men. Hence, the imagery portrays endurance as a long, continual process that necessitates suffering and pain, but also enables progress and achievement. *Highly proficient, succinct para.*

The tones of both personas are similar, yet initially different in the way they portray the endurance of both men. Poem B's initial tone is different from that of Poem A's as it is seemingly more condescending towards the 'Peasant', describing him as having a "half-witted grin" and asserting that "There is something frightening in the vacancy of his mind". This achieves a peculiar effect of having the audience object to the persona's overly-condescending tone and views at the first 16 lines of the poem, as Thomas disguises the poem's true purpose by presenting an objectionable view through the condescending tone. The condescending tone is contrasted with Poem B's more restrained and sympathetic tone, which can be seen through the description of how the serf's heart is "insult torn", inclining the reader to agree and take pity on the Serf. Both poems do make the transition to a similar tone though; as the reader approaches the denouement, the persona's tone in both poems become more stirring and reverent, as they both praise the efforts of endurance for both men, by likening the peasant's endurance to "an impregnable fortress" that withstands the "siege of rain and the wind's attrition", and also emphasizing that the endurance of the Serf is able to "plough down palaces, and thrones, and towers". This emphatic ending draws attention to the importance of the endurance and contribution of the 'Serfs' and 'Peasants' in society, presenting endurance as something that is praiseworthy and that often goes unnoticed.

*closer analysis here?*

*To lead the reader through a 'realisation' of sorts?*

*Some close analysis of effects?*

*TO NEeds to be analysed properly. don't "re-use" images!*

*Already analysed. Look at 'I' or 'His' or 'him' to analyse TONE (e.g. this is your as prototype, Remember him, for he too...)*

The language employed by both authors is largely different in terms of the diction and style of writing. In Poem A, the diction used in describing the Serf's actions and state of being, such as "His naked skin", "torrid mist" and "crimson furrow grooves" is connotative of the hardship he is undergoing. It also explicitly evokes the feeling of an agonizing pity within the reader as the description is highly visceral. Compared with Campbell's diction, Thomas employs more simple words and naturalistic descriptions, such as the "green skin", "stiff sea of clods" and "spittled mirth". The deliberate simplicity in his choice of words, also seen through the many monosyllabic words, is perhaps to reflect the type of life that Peasant lives: simple, uncomplicated and unexciting. This would give greater emphasis to the poem after line 16, where there is a shift to more grandiose language and

*Rather repetitive. Since you've looked at the description of the serf & peasant, maybe look at the depiction*

*of the environment / setting. You could also bring in RHYTHM which does enhance the mood & register. Which is more pensive, and which more emphatic?*

*(Note pauses in B's closing lines)*

words with a higher register ("prototype", "siege of rain), as the persona conveys the view that we must respect the endurance and achievements of peasants. Therefore, both poets use different styles in their language to create contrasting effects, but ultimately serve the same purpose of drawing the reader's focus to the subject's enduring nature.

The use of sounds in both poems is somewhat different, but creates similar effects on the reader. In Poem A, the sibilants and fricatives such as "slow somnambulist" and "falling flowers" give the poem a smooth, slow and fluid flow, creating the sense that the Serf's endurance is a slow process which implies that the suffering and pain is much more prolonged. This allows the reader to contemplate fully the hardship the Serf has to endure, and reinforces his/her sense of sympathy. In contrast, the patterning of sound in 'A Peasant' is less significant, though Thomas uses some cutting sounds as seen in "cracks the cheeks" and "crude", which emphasizes the harsh conditions and brutal toll it takes on the peasant through the jarring quality. Hence, the use of sounds in Poem A is more significant in emphasizing the prolonged nature of endurance.

Lastly, the structure of both poems is largely similar and slightly different. Both poems consist of only one stanza, giving the reader a sense of continuance. This perhaps allows the reader to feel the continual nature of endurance as portrayed in the poems. Moreover, what is far more significant is the rhyming pattern of both poems. The ABAB end-rhyme of both poems is relatively consistent until the shift in rhythm near the end of each poem. In the last line of Poem A, there is a significant change in the pace and rhythm of the poem, with three pauses mid-line and a much longer sentence. This change gives greater emphasis to the last line, which extols the Serf's achievements. Similarly in Poem B, the shift in rhyming pattern from line 16 to 17 coincides with the shift in tone, register and mood. The steady, plodding rhythm makes the tone of the poem more emphatic and measured as seen in the line "Remember him, for he, too, is a winner of wars", drawing emphasis to the purpose of glorifying and crediting the peasant's achievement of "Enduring like a tree under the curious stars".

In conclusion, by establishing a narrative that observes the hardships in the life of a 'Serf' and a 'Peasant, both poems seek to portray the endurance of the common men as long-lasting, continual, and something often goes unrecognized, but is praiseworthy as it brings about "slow progress". Hence, the message of the two poems is to respect and credit the common people, who endure the hardships of life, so that society may achieve progress.

V. competent analysis of both poems that needs to be more thorough in its reading of tone. You may want to be more concise when it comes to 'diction' and 'sound' paragraphs.

## Poem Comparison: The Serf and A Peasant

Alistair Chong 2T37

Both poems illustrate the shining quality of endurance – a quality that leaves the reader filled with hope and admiration by the end of the poem. In both emotion-evoking pieces of work, both *The Serf* and *A Peasant* places emphasis on a single person – and his fierce display of human spirit, glorifying the qualities of the subject. Both poems pit their subjects against the adversity of time and forces of nature, but do so in different manners. *A Serf* serves as a social commentary – readers leave with an appreciation of the common man, understanding the trials and tribulations they undergo, and realise although they may be a small, disregarded member of a society, they are indispensable. *A Peasant* is a eulogy, - remembrance of a man who was exceptional in his time of work.

Effective intro.

differences seem rather literal. Effects & purpose do overlap across both...

The language in both poems differs slightly. *The Serf* adopts a more sympathetic tone, and also hints at societal suppression. The persona in the poem describing the scene seems distant and detached from his environment, and only uses the first person personal pronoun "I" later in the poem. At no point does he give a personal opinion, making the poem sound like a narration or a documentary. However, it moves from cold to a hopeful tone, and traces of admiration in the persona's voice. This is evident in the diction used, as initially words in the semantic field associated with difficult labour and poverty are used, such as "torrid", "naked", "wounds" and "rasping", but later, shift to use more positive and empowering diction, highlighting the strengths of the serf, such as "timeless", "progress" and "surlly". Especially important are the words that show inflicted pain, such as "wounds", and also with the mention of time, such as the lexical repetition of "slow" which fully brings out the quality of endurance over time. In contrast, *A Peasant* adopts a more idyllic and calm tone initially, then empowering against the adversity of nature. It also ends off hopeful and admiring, remaining a fairly positive poem throughout with not much shift in perspective and direction. This is also seen in the diction, where words in the semantic field of farming and hard work are used, such as "ordinary", "crude", "clods", "sour", "siege" and "attrition", and later shifts to diction in the semantic field of strength and perseverance, such as "impregnable", "fortress", "enduring" and "curious". Here the quality of endurance is shown through the contrast between the forces of nature and the human strength, most notably in the use of "attrition" and "fortress", which show that although the weather may be continually attacking them for long periods, they are a "fortress", and cannot be broken so easily. The strong diction with heavily connotative meaning in both poems evokes great emotion.

Some close analysis of evidence later?

More comparison of effects?

Next we compare the style of both poems, and both of them use imagery to convey the hardship and the endurance of the people subjected to it. In *The Serf*, imagery describing the dirty and difficult environment is used, along with colour imagery that enhances the vivid descriptions. "Naked skin" and "torrid mist" show the poverty and hardship associated with the line of work, while "through the green his crimson furrow grooves" makes use of colour imagery to show the contrast of man and nature, green pitted against the strong contrast of red. However in *A Peasant*, we see the imagery shift in patterns, first from one of nature; "sheep in a gap of cloud", "chipping the green skin", "from yellow bones", "sea of clods", to one associated with filth and manual labour; "sour with years of sweat", "siege of rain", to imagery of strength and larger ideas, such as "impregnable fortress", "winner of wars" and "curious stars". It is important to observe the changing pattern, as the imagery used again helps to bring out the quality of endurance; by describing the peasant as a "fortress", a stronghold usually for the royal to reside in times of war, not only does it imply

Close analysis? - So what?

Close analysis

Enough 'big picture'.  
Delve into  
DETAIL!

that the peasant is a bulwark against the barbaric nature; a pillar of human strength the society finds so critical, but also accords him a certain prestige and no longer degrades him according to social status. This is further enhanced by the phrase "winner of wars", that he too, has a share in the national victory for he is the key to the nation's progress. We also see the colour imagery at work here, but this time to show the suffering endured by the peasant, how nature has made them unnatural; their skin is no longer tan but green, bones no longer white but yellow with decay. Comparing the two poems, different types of imagery are used, but for the same purpose: they both bring out the sheer perseverance in the subjects. As a social commentary, it is also important to note that the subjects do not just refer to the individuals themselves; they represent the working class in society as a whole, especially those who work on farms and engage in difficult manual labour. Thus the vivid imagery helps the reader to sympathize and appreciate the working class of society more. Although both do invoke these feelings, it is a bit different in *A Peasant* because it actually mentions a person, "Iago Prytherch," so the tone of the poem sounds more like someone recalling Iago. Thus it becomes like a tribute, an acknowledgement of an outstanding individual.

rhyme in A?

Awk.

Both poems share similar form. They are both single stanza poems that use the free verse and feature enjambments. Both appear as a narrative initially, describing a scene like a documentary would. However both poems end on a different perspective, which glorify the subject instead of just describing it. In *The Serf*, the enjambment "lies fallow now" is especially effective, as it represents the turning point in the poem. The sudden break in the flow of reading seems to separate all the suffering and harshness of nature with the progress of the serf. Not only that, it seems to forget all the hardship but instead look to the future, where the antithesis of "now" and the "slow progress" to the future becomes more apparent. This is also a metaphorical turning of tides, where the poem ends with a twist: it possibly alludes to a uprising or a rebellion by the working class. This is evident in "ploughs down palaces, and thrones and towers," which may suggest an overthrowing of power. There is a shift from plowing earth, soil and dirt, to more concrete objects indicative of power and status – a metaphorical plowing that will turn the tables. However, in *A Peasant*, there is no uprising but we still see the same progression of a narration of hardship to the admiration of the common man. It is initially more idyllic and reflective, but eventually becomes more somber as we realise Iago has passed. It ends by glorifying the peasant for his endurance against hardship. The long stanza reads almost like a tribute, as mentioned before, and the run on lines make it seem like a speech that acknowledge Iago as a exceptional peasant of his time. The poem's shift away from earthly things is turned towards the "curious stars", which suggest something more cosmic, as if the Gods are looking down on everything Iago has done. The adjective "curious" would then suggest that the Gods too look down in amazement of this display of human spirit and strength, and the imagery of a "tree" shows how steadfast, sturdy and timeless he is. The whole phrase "enduring like a tree under the curious stars" would suggest that he left his legacy behind, and will be remembered reverently for many years to come, thus the imagery of a tree that will live on for many years to come. Thus this small twist at the end ends the poem on a serious and reverent mood, while readers come to admire and marvel at Iago.

by something but RHYTHM.

you hv covered enough of progression in your 2 prev. paras.

Analysis of B is better.

Not necessarily

and - focus on effects

Effect of closing line?

Inadequate comparison in this para.

While both poems show how man can be pitted against nature and still be the citadel amongst the harsh forces, the both end on very different notes. One suggests a new future at hand; an uprising and overthrowing of authority, while the other looks back, remains pensive, reflective and somber. Nevertheless, the both invoke strong emotions from the reader, and leave the reader not only admiring the work of the working class and their

display of inhuman endurance, but also a reminder that the working class are indeed valuable, crucial members of society, and they too, are winners of wars.

A competent effort that can afford to compare and analyse

both poems far more closely. Rhythm and rhyme can be further

evaluated too. Nevertheless, a thoroughly coherent interpretation.

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