

## WJEC EDUQAS: COMPONENT 1

### Section A: Poetry

The following responses to the questions in the updated [Specimen Assessment Materials](#) and Principal Examiner comments have been shared to give centres further support in teaching William Blake's *Poems Selected by Patti Smith* (Vintage) which will be examined for the first time in summer 2022. Thank you to the centre and to the candidates who have shared work to make the document possible.

#### N.B.

- These are only examples of approaches to tasks and should not be viewed as a template.
- Other approaches are valid and will be rewarded by examiners.
- Responses were not necessarily completed under the same timed conditions as an examination.

#### William Blake: *Poems selected by Patti Smith* (Vintage)

4. (ii) "Blake's appeal lies in his ability to discover complexities in the simplest subjects."  
With close reference to relevant contexts, examine this comment on Blake's poetry. [40]

#### Example 1

As the statement suggests, there is a clear focus on "simple subjects" within Blake's poetry, often seen in his use of natural symbols and imagery such as in 'My Pretty Rose Tree' in which the symbol of the 'rose' is used to explore a complex relationship which arguably brings a great appeal to Blake and his poetry. However, there is also evidence within Blake's poetry that Blake doesn't just discover complexities within "simple subjects" but within complex subjects such as the human mind in 'The Human Abstract' and the corruption of the church in 'The little Vagabond'. Notably, these poems don't feature simple, natural imagery or symbols and openly discuss about the complex issues previously stated which is where Blake's actual appeal lies, not in discovering complexities within simple subjects.

Although, Blake does clearly use simple symbols such as flowers to discover more complex themes of relationships and contrasting views within those relationships that challenge the narrative of innocence. In 'My Pretty Rose Tree', the persona talks about the temptation of cheating on their partner. 'A flower was offer'd to me' is evidence of this and 'flower' is the sexual organ of the plant which leads to implicit themes of romance and sexual relations being inferred. Also, the symbol of the 'rose' itself is a stereotypical symbol of romance and love (often associated with Valentines day) which a reader would typically understand and therefore the idea that the 'rose' is being personified and not just this symbol of love but a symbol of a relationship and the complexities within a relationship is unexpected and therefore creates an appeal within Blake's poetry. Despite the flower being 'sweet', which connotes that the persona was tempted by the flower and recognises its beauty, the persona passes it by and yet the 'rose turn'd away with jealousy' which demonstrates an argument within the relationship. Not only is the 'rose being personified but it is 'Turn'd away' which suggests real emotion and disappointment towards the persona and this highlights the complexities within the symbol of the rose. This is perhaps Blake's way of demonstrating how despite the theme of love being associated with a rose, a rose does have 'thorns' and actually the rose symbolises the deep emotions associated with love as well which are jealous, possessiveness, sadness and betrayal. Interestingly, the relationship between the persona in the poem and the 'Rose Tree' can be linked to Blake's own relationship with his wife. Blake believed in 'open relationships' which would allow him and his wife to see other people romantically while still being devoted to each other however, his wife disagreed with him

on this and had the more conventional, traditional view of marriage. Here, the persona is Blake seeing temptation around him and recognising the beauty of other 'flowers' and the 'Rose tree' (Blake's wife) feeling jealous and hurt that the persona looks at others this way. This context further supports the argument that Blake is able to discover complexities within simple subjects because, as demonstrated, the symbol of the 'rose' is used to be more reflective of a relationship and its complexities that perhaps reflect Blake's own struggles in his relationship (and as seen in many poems throughout this collection, Blake does like to bring his own views into his poetry which adds to his appeal).

This natural imagery of flowers being used to discover complexities is also explored in 'The Lilly' which is engraved alongside 'My Pretty Rose Tree'. While 'The Lilly' is only 4 lines long, Blake manages to transform the conventional image of the Lilly into one of innocence, challenging the conventional narrative of innocence. A 'Lilly' is a flower often associated with death and funeral imagery however in this poem, the 'lily' is being compared to a 'rose; and a 'sheep' (two arguable symbols of innocence) and is shown to prevail as a symbol of eternal innocence. The idea that 'Nor a thorn, nor a threat stain her beauty bright' connotes the idea that the 'lilly' symbolises eternal peace and sleep because that's what death actually symbolises. 'Nor a thorn Nor a threat' suggests that in death no harm can be done to you and that death is the most innocent state as without harm there is no need for revenge or other sins to be committed. 'Beauty bright' also suggests the idea that in death there is 'eternal beauty' which also positively describes death. In 'The Lilly' Blake uses a simple image of a flower that is associated with funeral and turns it into a narrative that shows death as being an innocent state, as no harm or sin can be committed against you after death unlike on earth alive where you can be subject to 'thorns' or 'threats'. However as David Punter notes, Blake's poetry is "fundamentally open ended" which provides a good basis for argument, poetry like 'The Lilly' and 'My Pretty Rose Tree' have no clear meaning but the symbols can be shaped to discover a range of complexities that attracts people to Blake's poetry, therefore being his main "appeal" as the statement suggests.

However, Blake also discovers and openly discusses complex issues and complex subjects that attract a large appeal to his poetry. For example, in 'The Human Abstract' the idea that the human mind is the agent of its own downfall is presented which is an extremely complex idea to portray within poetry. 'The Divine Image' (the innocence partner poem to 'The Human Abstract') lays out these virtues within humanity that are virtues of God. 'Mercy Pity Peace and Love' are the 'virtues of delight' that symbolise innocence and trying to connect with these virtues in order to connect with God. However, in 'The Human Abstract' these virtues are manipulated to show the downfalls of humanity. 'Pity would be no more of we did not make someone poor' suggests the idea that 'pity' is a virtue that can only exist if there is poverty and the suffering of the poor and the use of 'we' suggests that the whole of society should take accountability for the suffering of the poor even those who do show pity, as actually the message that is being highlighted is that feeling pity doesn't make someone virtuous and is an inactive thing to do while people are suffering (and as seen in 'London' there is so much suffering in the 'charter'd streets'). Furthermore, throughout the poem there is a running symbol of a 'tree' full of 'fruit of deceit' which has biblical links to the story of Adam and Eve and the tree that had the forbidden apples on it that Eve was eventually tempted into eating by the devil. The tree is also associated with a 'Raven' in the poem and a 'raven' is a bird symbolising death which therefore links the growing 'tree' with themes of temptation, death and lies (deceit also means to deceive someone, to lie to them) and is a dark symbol running throughout the poem. The last line of the poem states that his tree 'grows one in the human brain' which is a powerful statement to make as it associates the 'root' of the human mind essentially with corruption, 'deceit', death and an overall negative image of humanity is portrayed. It is with this last line that Blake highlights the message that the human downfall is due to human kind themselves and that corruption lies within human minds. This idea of the human mind and manipulated virtues is a complex religious and philosophical discussion which Blake doesn't hide behind a simple symbol of a flower or an animal but rather openly portrays within his poetry and that is where his real "appeal" lies. This is also true for 'The Little Vagabond' in which a child is presented to be talking about how the church is corrupted and how conventional religious views should be challenged (reflecting Blake's own beliefs). The church is

‘cold’ which demonstrates disconnection and a dislike for institutional religion within the poetry that is not hid behind a simple symbol of innocence but rather openly confronted.

In conclusion, despite the use of symbols such as flowers (the ‘rose’ and the ‘Lilly’) being used to portray complexities within “simple subjects” such as love and death there is a major emphasis on challenging the traditional views within Blake’s poetry. The in depth, complex discussion of the human mind in ‘The Human Abstract’ and the disconnection with institutional religion in ‘The Little Vagabond’ demonstrates Blakes real appeal lying in the way that he openly discovers complexities within complex subjects. Furthermore, considering the context of which Blake was writing in, the 18th century, there appeal in Blake’s poetry is heightened because the 18th century was a traditional time period (slavery still existed, gender inequality was very much so present in this context) with traditional beliefs in the church and the fact that Blake would challenge these beliefs so openly and present more unconventional ideas throughout his poetry is what is more appealing than simply discovering complexities in the simplest subjects.

<b>Overview and Advice</b>	There is a sensible interrogation of the title in the introduction. with clear signposts to three poems for consideration. Analysis launches in second paragraph where the student could address sentence / paragraph structure (over-complex and crowded) and vocabulary to achieve a ‘clear academic style’), for example “cheating on their partner” could be replaced by “infidelity”. Some good ideas (although not always completely clear) and integration of relevant contextual issues although a little over-written and could be even more tentative in asserting meanings and linking text to context. There is some lack of clarity in second half of the essay but there is a purposeful attempt to address imagery throughout, in the light of the task. It might be best to tackle fewer poems in greater depth.
<b>AO1</b>	<b>High Band 3</b> Some slips in expression and organisation but consistently engaged and relevant. Expression is generally accurate and clear.
<b>AO2</b>	<b>Low Band 4</b> Some evidence of sound textual analysis with secure and apt support in places.
<b>AO3</b>	<b>Low Band 3</b> Assertions become a little general towards the end but there is some evidence of a clear grasp and understanding.
<b>AO5</b>	<b>High Band 3</b> Clear and appropriate consideration of the view expressed in the question. Comments on quoted critic are valid but undeveloped.

## Example 2

Blake's ability to find complexities in subjects that first appear to be simple is undoubtedly a significant part of his appeal, and while I would mostly agree with the statement, the subjects explored by Blake are not always simple on the surface. The poems in Blake's 'Songs of Innocence and Experience' showcase his ability to discover and explore complexities in his writing.

Many of Blake's poems present the reader with an initially simple subject which is then built upon and developed into a much more complex subject, or in many cases multiple complex subjects. "The Lamb" from 'Songs of Innocence' is initially presented to be a poem about a lamb which the reader would assume represents Jesus, particularly when thinking about how prominent and influential religious teachings were in Britain during Blake's time. However, from closer analysis, the poem seems to represent a wider concept that, while still linked to Christianity, applies to everybody. The message in "The Lamb" appears to be that God created us all to perfection, and therefore people should treasure the innocence given to them. The idea of innocence is shown in the line, "softest clothing, woolly, bright" suggesting that we are tender and protected as God's creations, the idea of "clothing" implying that people are immediately protected and cared for by a peaceful religious presence when they come into the world. "We are called by his name" suggests the influence of God and enforces the idea that a part of God lives within all of humanity as a result of its creation, this idea introducing more complexities in Blake's writing than what would be initially apparent in the reading of this poem. Early on in the poem, the reader is proposed the question "Dost thou know who made thee? Gave thee life, and bid the feed", the use of "thee" making it clear that the reader is supposed to reflect upon their own existence and not just think about the creation of Jesus. In a similar light to 'The Lamb', the poem 'The Tyger' from 'Songs of Experience' presents an animal that represents a lot more than it initially appears to. Themes of industrialisation and fear of God are presented in this poem, for example "in what furnace was thy brain" presents a double meaning, either of the harsh conditions of the Industrial Revolution (which Blake would have witnessed first-hand) or the fear of God's ability to create such ferocious creatures. The repeated idea in this poem about Christianity's influence over people to the point of fear has been commented on by critic David Punter, saying "the priest is wandering around trying to tell you what to do, and, for Blake, that's not fine", which applies to many other of his poems, particularly in 'Songs of Experience', such as 'The Angel'.

Blake also writes about clearly complex subjects in great detail, these poems often having many layers to decipher. 'The Angel', a holy figure which many people were trying to make sense of at the time, presents the restriction of Christian beliefs, presenting God's protection as something that is not necessarily a good thing. "I dried my tears, and arm'd my fears/ with ten thousand shields and spears" shows the effect that the narrator's "Angel mild" has had on them, as they are unable to fulfil any of their desires, instead having to "arm" themselves of them as a result of their Christian beliefs. "The time of youth was fled, and grey hairs were on my head" follows this idea as it suggests the regret that has come with the persona's many missed opportunities in their life, "grey" having connotations of aging as well as dullness.

In conclusion, I would mostly agree that a large part of Blake appeal, particularly in the 'Songs of Innocence and Experience' poems, lies in his ability to find complexities in simple subjects, particularly with his use of natural and religious imagery. However, some of the poems in which he explores such complexities do not appear simple at first glance or with further analysis, as they explore subjects that many people at the time would have limited knowledge of.

<b>Overview and Advice</b>	Very clear, concise style with only minor blemishes in expression which suggests 'an academic style and register'. Sadly, the essay fades away after the detailed writing in the second paragraph. A very promising candidate who would achieve much higher marks with a more balanced approach.
<b>A01</b>	<b>Low Band 4</b> All the signs of an engaged, clearly informed writer but the lack of effective organisation keeps the mark at a low Band 4 with a risk of slipping into Band 3.
<b>A02</b>	<b>Low Band 4</b> Some sound and detailed analysis with well-chosen, economical support worthy of Band 4, but mark is depressed by the lack of development in second half of the essay.
<b>A03</b>	<b>Low Band 3</b> Clear grasp of the significance of relevant contexts but comments are cursory and fairly general.
<b>A05</b>	<b>Low Band 3</b> Some sensible interrogation of the view in the task but David Punter's comment quoted at the end of the second paragraph needs more careful integration. It is appropriate but not as 'purposeful' as it might be in the way it used here.

### Example 3

While I would agree that Blake often finds complexity in simple or perhaps even benign imagery, using the simple to demonstrate clear and complex meaning, it can be argued as inaccurate to claim that his appeal lies solely within this idea. Blake's role as a rebellious poet, writing in contrary to many of the beliefs seen at the time, can arguably be seen as just as equal if not more so than Blake's use of simple imagery.

A poem which supports Blake's complex use of simple imagery is *My Pretty Rose Tree*. A poem which on the surface is about a tree, a fairly simple and benign image. However Blake turns this poem into one about faithfulness in love, and monogamy. Blake uses the image of the flower ('such a flower as May never bore', representing its almost otherworldly) to represent an 'other' to love with 'My Pretty Rose Tree', who represents a significant other. The poem uses the image of a flower to contrast that of the rose tree in the poem, perhaps due to the idea that a flower is temporary, it only blooms once, and then dies. A rose tree however, blooms many times, for a far longer period. In this Blake is attempting to demonstrate the beauty of his partner, rather than the beauty of another flower. Despite the Rose's 'thorns' and 'jealousy', it continuously gives love and support, unlike the flower, who blooms once. This complex theme about faithfulness in love was drawn by Blake from a very simple image of a tree and a flower. The change in tone in the poem, too, puts stress on the importance of the rose tree, the sudden shift to a far more serious topic. In the quote: 'my rose turned away with jealousy', contrasting with the far more positive imagery and tone seen earlier in the poem. This places stress on the rose tree as a far more serious, important and permanent love when compared to the flower, as while the more playful language used in the first half of the poem indicates a more 'fun' love, the flower does not have the same permanence as the rose tree. This demonstrates that Blake could draw the most complex of images from the most simple. This is further ratified in *The Lilly*, once again a poem with the simple image of a flower, however this flower takes on the complex image of harm in love, and the rarity of love that does not harm in any way. The Lily in the poem is described as having 'beauty bright', and 'shall in love delight', contrasted with the much more common images of a rose and a ram, who are described as having 'a thorn' and a 'threatening horn' respectively. The idea that the rose and the sheep were at the time of writing, very common images (seen in Blake's works outside of this poem, and further in the Romantic movement as a whole) is important, as Blake is putting forth the idea that the commonly used symbols of love and innocence, the rose and the sheep, can often harm an individual, a ram has horns and a rose has thorns. However the less commonly used image of a lily is, in Blake's opinion, far more beautiful, but also far less seen as an image in Romantic poetry. Blake is perhaps trying to make the point that love which does not harm an individual seen in the lily, is far less common than conventional and more 'normal' love, (seen in the typicality of the rose as a symbol of love). Once again Blake is drawing vastly complex ideas from relatively little in terms of images, able to use images such as animals and flowers to construct complex points about faithfulness and harmful love, thereby showing how Blake uses the simple to achieve the complex.

However, while the question may be correct in terms of Blake's use of simple imagery, it does not take into account that it is not the whole reason for Blake's 'appeal'. Blake's poetry stands aside from his contemporaries in 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century England, who often had a distaste for Blake's work. It is this countering of conventional ideas of what poetry 'was' at the time which can just as equally be pointed to in terms of Blake's 'appeal'. For example in the poem 'The Sick Rose', one interpretation argues that Blake is subtly mocking the state of England, this can be seen in the use of the rose as an image, as while also symbolising love, the rose also symbolises England, and so in quotes such as 'O Rose, thou art sick', it can be seen how Blake may be writing about the state of England at the time. This idea is bolstered by the idea that we know Blake was unhappy with the state of England at the time, as it was gripped by the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, something in which Blake took great discomfort, and so with this in mind, it is easy to see how Blake challenges conventional stereotypes of poetry, as not many poets at the time would have challenged their country so fundamentally like Blake may have been doing here. This idea of challenging conventional stereotypes also reappears in poems such as 'The Garden of Love', in which Blake again criticises a major institution (this time the Church) at a time when such things were usually not included into poetry. The priests in this poem are seen to be 'binding with briars my joys and desires', this is a very blatant



criticism of the church as an institution, with the image created of priests constraining an individual, and preventing them from reaching their true desires and preventing them from being happy. This criticism would have not been seen by many of Blake’s contemporaries, and while it did indeed make him unpopular at the time, he is now seen as an early proponent of many social movements. His acceptance of the black child in ‘The Little Black Boy’, in which he claims that black children will ‘be like him’ (‘him’ referring to white children) in death. This idea of accepting that both black and white are all equal, especially in the eyes of God, would have also been unheard of at the time, and indicates a clear point unseen in many of Blake’s contemporaries, and is arguably far more important as a factor in deciding where Blake’s ‘appeal’ really lies.

Overall, while Blake’s use of simple imagery is ultimately revolutionary in determining how he constructs extremely complex themes from relatively nothing, the point made in the statement about Blake’s ‘appeal’ largely does not hold up, as it fails to take into account Blake’s rebellious nature and challenging of conventional stereotypes is perhaps more of a factor in deciding his appeal.

<b>Overview and Advice</b>	Makes a very clear, well-focused start with neatly embedded AO5. Expression can be a little idiosyncratic and better paragraphing would assist clarity / organisation of material. Tends to be more explanatory than analytical in places (see treatment of “thorn” and “horn”) and quite broadly assertive of context. The response continues in this vein with general and questionable comments on Romanticism / politics / Industrial Revolution which need sharpening. Some developed interrogation of the view in the task addresses AO5 at several points.
<b>AO1</b>	<b>Low Band 4</b> Just falls short of a consistent academic style and register but there are signs of these elements. Expression can be awkward / unclear at times and organisation of material could be improved. Still clearly informed and engaged and mostly accurate and coherent which brings the work just into Band 4.
<b>AO2</b>	<b>Low Band 4</b> Some sound and accurate analysis with secure and well-chosen support. Slightly weakened by a tendency to explain and to not develop points fully.
<b>AO3</b>	<b>High Band 3</b> Clear grasp of the significance of contexts but not yet sound and secure as there is a tendency to assert / generalise.
<b>AO5</b>	<b>High Band 3</b> Makes clear and appropriate use of views in the question.

#### Example 4

Blake takes complex subjects and explores their complexities, countering society's perspective that such subjects are simple. Blake spoke of his "fourfold vision", in which he supposedly utilised every dimension of human mental faculty to analyse and examine. However, 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian society thought of him as mad for believing so. This perhaps informs how a "visionless" society only sees simplicity in subject matter which is actually complex; as evidenced by Blake's collection of Songs of Innocence and Experience.

A "visionless" 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian society may interpret My Pretty Rose Tree as exploring the simple subjects of flowers and rose trees. However, complexity can be seen in Blake's exploration of the conflict between unrestrained, natural desire and monogamous relationships. It was known that Blake strongly believed in sexual freedom; that it was natural to let desire run free. This was atypical of 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian societal convention, personified in Blake's wife's belief in monogamy. Such knowledge informs the perspective that the 'flower' represents the women of Blake's potential affairs, whilst the 'Pretty Rose-tree' represents his wife. 'as May never bore' amplifies the narrator's sense of desire for the 'flower', which has connotations of sexual offering. In 'I've a Pretty Rose-tree, [...]/I passed the sweet flower o'er.', Blake perhaps depicts his loyalty to his wife despite their clash of sexual beliefs. Some might explain Blake's variation in natural imagery as a device to contrast the shallowness of solely sexual offerings with that of a relationship: a flower is insubstantial outside of its biological function, yet trees are thought of as strongly and stably rooted. 'her thorns were my only delight' perhaps confirms the insubstantiality of the flower, while also suggesting the narrator's lover erecting a layer of protection, perhaps hinting at how a lack of nurture results in lover's vulnerability. In support of the substantiality of the tree by contrast, the narrator 'tend[s] to her by day and by night;', implying care and growth like the cultivation of a relationship. Furthermore, Blake's gendering of the tree as female perhaps more explicitly identifies the tree as a metaphor for his wife. In 'my Rose turned away with jealousy', Blake perhaps illustrates a lover's pain at being second in priority, thus solidifying their sense of vulnerability. Hence, Blake exposes the true complexity in what a "visionless" 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian society may view as a simple poem.

A "visionless" 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian society may view Holy Thursday (Innocence) as a poem depicting the Holy Thursday day of charity, on which wealthy members of society kindly give money to impoverished orphans. However, on a deeper level, Blake undermines the goodness of the rich philanthropists in their prevention of these orphans from accessing God. In 'Beneath them sit the aged men,' Blake highlights the irony of the rich's superiority complex. While 'aged' perhaps points to the men's greater life length, and, thus, experience, as their source of perceived superiority, Blake's personal belief that children were the purest and most innocent form of human existence perhaps reinforces the irony that the children are indeed closer to God. In 'mighty wind', Blake perhaps depicts the children as a personification of divinity, insofar as their ability to summon on earth the powers of Greek Gods Boreas, Zephyrus, Notus, and Eurus (the Gods of wind). In illustrating the children's seeming power, Blake amplifies their sense of helplessness: they are at the mercy of the supposedly charitable men which control them. A "visionless" 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian society may perceive the occasion as solely good natured, as evidenced by the semantic field of purity ('white as snow', 'flowers', 'radiance', 'lambs', 'innocent', 'heaven', 'harmonious', 'guardians', 'angel,'), yet Blake undermines Holy Thursday as far from so. In starting this train of thought, 'innocent faces clean' may seem to convey absolute purity. However, 'faces clean' suggests inauthenticity, like the children have been pre-prepared to appear innocent. It also suggests that they were once dirty, perhaps hinting at the damaging effects of the experienced men upon shaping the children. Furthermore, in 'The children walking two & two', Blake creates a sweet and innocent image; a sense of calm from being in pairs. However, upon deeper analysis, 'two & two' perhaps indicates the restriction placed upon the children by the aged and experienced beadles which lead them. This goes against Blake's belief in a fenceless existence, perhaps highlighting how the constraint of the aged and experienced men hinder the children's ability to access God. In addition, a visionless society may view Blake's employment of the semantic field of community - 'seen in 'multitude', 'companies', 'multitudes', 'Thousands'- as a reflection of the unity of the rich philanthropists and



the orphans. However, upon closer examination, the semantic field of community belongs only to the children, perhaps reflective of the isolation of the impoverished in Georgian society; thus, emphasising the irony that they are being helped. In 'raising their innocent hands', a "visionless" society may interpret such behaviour as the children expressing thankfulness towards the rich philanthropists. Alternatively, Blake may be signifying their helplessness in their prayer - a call to for God's help to free them of their metaphorical shackles placed upon them by the rich philanthropists. Therefore, in Holy Thursday, Blake exposes the true complexity of that which "visionless" 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian society may be perceived as simple day of charity.

A "visionless" society may interpret *The Ecchoing Green* as a poem simply about children playing and the elderly watching. However, Blake's deeper exploration reveals the subject of fading innocence. For the elderly, this seems to take the form of the acceptance of passing away, while, for the children – unbeknownst to them – Blake hints at the dawn of Industrialisation encroaching on the children's unrestrained and innocent existence within nature. In the harmonious co-existence of the young and the old, Blake also highlights the notion of the circle of life. In how 'The Sun does arise' and 'The sun does descend', Blake perhaps presents the day as a metaphor for the circle of life – the young are just beginning their lives, whereas the elderly, in 'laugh[ing] away care', accept the approaching end of theirs. Nonetheless, in 'laugh away care', Blake displays a merry tone associated with the elderly, perhaps presenting his ideal: that we should not be bitter towards the coming and going of life – it is the law of nature. To support this further, Blake ties the semantic field of joy with nature imagery: 'happy the skies', 'merry bells ring/To welcome the Spring', 'The sky lark[...] The birds[...]Sing[...]To the bells' cheerful sound'. In addition, Blake's choice in physically distancing the elderly from the playing children is perhaps a wider metaphor for the distance of the elderly to their youth, thus illustrating their fading innocence. Likewise, in 'our youth-time were seen', the past tense verb creates a sense of nostalgia from the elderly of the irretrievable memory of youth. On the one hand, 'The sun does descend,/And our sports have an end.' could be symbolic of the elderly approaching death. Alternatively, perhaps Blake is signifying the end of a fenceless, rural existence, thus hinting at the dawn of industrialisation and the restriction it brings; as seen in London's 'charter'd street' and 'charter'd Thames', signifying control and rigidity due to new legal ownership. In 'Many sisters and brothers,/Like birds in their nest,/Are ready for rest,' Blake uses sense of innocence tied with imagery of the children's rest to ominously undercut the merry tone of the poem; the children are unaware that, in their sleep, their ability to play within nature is metaphorically dying – with every sleep, industrialisation looms nearer. Blake confirms such an idea in how sport is 'no more seen/On the darkening Green.', depicting both fading innocence and the death of a rural, unrestrained existence; such loss amplified by the definite nature of the full stop. Consequently, Blake exposes the true complexity in what a "visionless" 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian society may view as simple subject matter.

In *The Garden of Love*, a "visionless" society may simply see the discovery of a Church in place of what once was a garden. However, upon deeper examination, complexity can be seen in Blake's exploration of the damaging nature of organised religion in the restraint it places upon society's natural desires. In 'Thou shalt not' writ over the door;', Blake perhaps ties the identity of organised religion with restriction and punishment, implying a condoning of self-restraint. Blake's personal beliefs perhaps inform the narrator's word choice, as Blake himself stood strongly by freedom of desire; that it is natural for sexuality to run freely; this clashes with beliefs of the Church, such as in monogamy. In turning to the 'Garden of Love', Blake ties sexual desire with nature imagery, perhaps suggesting that the two belong together. To support this, Blake often links 'sweet flowers' to sexual offerings, as seen in *My Pretty Rose Tree*. Furthermore, in 'tomb stones where flowers should be;', Blake perhaps implies that, in restricting society's ability to freely express one's sexuality – as indicated by the Church's 'Thou shalt not' teachings – organised religion leads people to their deaths. Blake's description of priests in 'black gowns' may support this idea, as blackness commonly connotes death, whilst 'rounds' provides further imagery of regimentation. In 'binding with briars my joys & desires.', Blake villainises organised religion, with the tightness connoted by 'binding' indicative of the extent to which Blake perhaps believes religion restricts desire which, according to nature, should run free. Such

idea is heightened by the internal rhyme of ‘briars’ and ‘desires’, suggesting regimentation and conformity. Therefore, Blake sheds light on the true complexity of what may be perceived by a “visionless” 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian society as poem simply on gardens and religion.

<b>Overview and Advice</b>	The response begins in a mature, thoughtful style which neatly amalgamates the approaches to AO3 and AO5. Potential subtexts are fully explored and well-supported. The repeated device of “a visionless society” were a little thin but did not in the end detract from this sophisticated and creative response which was a pleasure to read. As in all the best responses, the student has approached all AOs in a fully integrated manner: context is always connected to analysis; AO3 and AO5 are also almost inseparable; a mature discussion is underway throughout and there is a very perceptive application of literary concepts.
<b>AO1</b>	<b>Band 5</b> Sophisticated, creative and perceptive. Very minor flaws in expression which are excusable under timed conditions.
<b>AO2</b>	<b>Band 5</b> Perceptive, confident analysis.
<b>AO3</b>	<b>Band 5</b> Productive, confident discussion and analysis.
<b>AO5</b>	<b>Band 5</b> Clear evidence of autonomous reading and mature, confident discussion.