To say that "fiction is an essentially rhetorical art" would be to speak the truth. The world in which a story takes place is the essence of the entire novel, and in order for the author's message to get across to the audience, they absolutely must be pulled in and forced to see the world through the author's eyes. In the novels *1984* by George Orwell, and *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood, both authors portray worst-case scenarios for the audience, and they rely heavily on the ability to become immersed in a fictional world in order to have the most effect.

By placing his protagonist, Winston Smith, in the ultra-militaristic country of Oceania, Orwell creates a vast setting that allows the audience to ask the question "how
did the world get this way?" In Orwell's eyes, the human race has become both threatened and protected by the ominous figurehead known as "Big Brother." Everyone has been conditioned in appearance, voice, activity, and even thought. Too afraid to rebel directly and risk being taken in—and subsequently tortured—by the Ministry of Love, the audience watches as "insignificant" Winston Smith slowly comes out of his shell. It is learned that people in Orwell's novel can only indulge themselves with things such as personal diaries, love affairs, and even healthy food by doing so in shade,trusts out of The Party's view. The audience is taken into Orwell's confidence as he shares some of his worst fears—including the lack of independence and freedom. The entire novel solidifies the fact that without assuming the author's point of view, the audience would not be taught the same lessons about a world at war; a world with almost complete censorship.

In her novel, Oryx and Crake, Atwood
also questions what the world would turn
into if it were run by the
determined "geniuses" while those "less
capable" were just left to themselves
to mill about with genetic-altering
miracle drugs. Again, the audience is
forced to see everything in extremes.
When Jimmy—at the time disillusioned
and calling himself "Snowman"—is one
of the only humans left on a sort of post-apocalyptic earth, Amado
lets his readers know just how
extreme the circumstances really
are. Slowly going insane with memories
of the past, Jimmy begins to reflect
how the people of his world were
deeply involved in achieving immortality.
Along the way, they dabbled in changing
and splicing the basic anatomy of
themselves and animals—which would
change not only physical appearance like hair colour, weight, and even height, but also moods and personality. Jimmy highlights everyone's obsession with becoming "different" and "better", how his friend Crake attempted to design "paradise": a world without humans to mess it up. To the audience, all of this seems radical and out of reach, so without being taken into the world through the use of extensive imagery and graphic allusions to the past, Atwood would not be able to get her point about how close to extinction the human race may be if they continue to pursue the "unattainable.

Of course, both of these novels have obvious similar characteristics. Both take place in a dying world, for instance. In 1984, the people are repressed to the point of unrecognized and in Oryx and Crake, the end of the world is more literal in the fact that the human race does actually die out, leaving only Jimmy and the Crackers.
in its wake. The key message that came from both Orwell and Atwood is along the lines of, "Look at what humanity can do to the world. Look at what it is capable of, and never let it come to fruition." By making the audience see the novels as they do, the authors have all the more effectively told their stories. They do not do this just by creating futuristic settings, however. They go into great detail about how their main characters operate. Not only does this make each novel more realistic, but the characterization of Jimmy and Winston—as well as Oryx, Crake, Julia, and O'Brian—allows the audience to connect on a much deeper level. Winston Smith, going along with the common name, could be anyone in the novel.
That is Orwell's point: Winston's shoes are easily stepped into because he, like the audience, is a human being. By placing such an insignificant person into the dire circumstances set up in 1984, the audience sees him just as Orwell does: as themselves. From the pain in his legs to the torture that is forever-rampant in his mind, the audience can automatically connect with him. When he tries to escape the bindsys of The Party by having sexual relations with Julia, the audience can understand his motives without a second thought. Julia herself can be understood in much the same way. By endearing her to her character, Orwell forces sympathy when she, along with Winston, is captured by the treachery of O'Brien. This is another character the audience can observe with a sense of familiarity, since everyone has experienced being figuratively stabbed in the back. By making O'Brien the villain, Orwell creates an all-powerful force for the reader's
In the beginning chapters of the novel, the audience has a difficult time affiliating with Jimmy. The circumstances are quite confusing—a dead world with one remaining human living alongside a mysterious race called “The Crakers.” Soon enough, though, emotions are stirred when Atwood reveals the tragic past Jimmy has had: a rebellious mother, an uncaring father, Crake, the odd but brilliant friend, and Oryx, the mysterious sexual girl he idealized. Not only does Jimmy have to deal with the guilt of having participated in an actual “Extinctionathon”—the Virus—but also the loss of the one girl he truly loved and the friend who went mad. By looking at Jimmy in this light, Atwood points out similarities between him...
and the audience. When Crake enters the picture, it is easy to relate to his sadistic outlook on life and the fact that he sees humanity itself as a plague. Crake may be Atwood's antagonist, but he is not truly "evil" like O'Brien in 1984, more, he is a man who did all the wrong things for the correct reason; to free humanity from itself. Oryx is a masterful contrast to both Jimmy and Crake. She is always a light in a world that grows darker and darker. The audience is drawn to her because of her mysterious past as a child protagonist as well as her dealings with teaching the Crakers. Her influence has shaped what is left of "the humans"... and that is not only the Crakers, but Jimmy as well.

It is clear that authors Atwood and Orwell have a strong input on what the audience takes out of their novels. Without their influence, the audience could take in a completely different meaning from what the authors actually wanted to convey.

Fiction truly is a "rhetorical art."
ENGLISH A1
HL
PAPER TWO
10 May 2011 (afternoon)

1001 (2843-061)

School:

Ronald Reagan High School

Candidate session number:

C-2843-061

Instructions to candidates:

- Check the details in the box above. If any detail is incorrect, inform the invigilator of the examination.
- Complete the candidate box below with the section(s)/option(s) and question(s) answered. If all questions have been answered, state ALL.
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