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Candidate session number

Candidate name

School number

School name

Examination session (May or November)

May

Year

2012

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: English B

(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: A comparison of the ways that Melvin Burgess's novel **Junk** and J.D. Salinger's **The Catcher in the Rye** present the struggle of young people to come to terms with the world in which they live.

Candidate's declaration

This declaration must be signed by the candidate; otherwise a grade may not be issued.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

This is the final version of my extended essay.

Candidate's signature: _____

Date: 07-03-2012

Supervisor's report and declaration

The supervisor must complete this report, sign the declaration and then give the final version of the extended essay, with this cover attached, to the Diploma Programme coordinator.

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters) _____

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

I was not familiar with Melvyn Burgess's novel "Junk" when _____ first approached me with the idea of comparing it with "The Catcher in the Rye", which she had read when younger in school in _____. She had the idea of how teenage audiences in particular could identify with the characters' uncertainties and acts of rebellion, while not wanting to be like the characters involved or go through the experiences they live through. She had also read that Burgess had been inspired by Salinger's novel to produce his version set in modern-day England.

It wasn't easy to go from the basic idea to finding an angle and structure for the proposed essay. _____ decided to focus on the differences in time period and the "temptations" they present, the unfriendliness of people/sense of alienation from society, and the effects of having a single first-person narrator in Salinger compared to Burgess's two voices. Keeping to the word limit became a major challenge and I know she had to revise and edit repeatedly to achieve the final result, while still maintaining the structure for comparison of the works. _____ freely admitted in her Viva Voce that she had found the whole process very difficult, as she's not accustomed to writing at length in English, but she was pleased to have completed the assignment in a way that she could be satisfied with the end-product.

This declaration must be signed by the supervisor; otherwise a grade may not be issued.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

I spent hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature: _____

Date: 24th March 2012

Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Candidate session number

Achievement level

Criteria	Examiner 1	maximum	Examiner 2	maximum	Examiner 3
A research question	2	2		2	
B introduction	2	2		2	
C investigation	2	4		4	
D knowledge and understanding	2	4		4	
E reasoned argument	2	4		4	
F analysis and evaluation	2	4		4	
G use of subject language	3	4		4	
H conclusion	1	2		2	
I formal presentation	2	4		4	
J abstract	2	2		2	
K holistic judgment	2	4		4	
Total out of 36	21				

Name of examiner 1: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: _____

Name of examiner 2: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: _____

Name of examiner 3: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: _____

IB Cardiff use only: B: _____

IB Cardiff use only: A: 10950

Date: 15/5

Extended Essay

Mervin Burgess's *Junk* and J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*

Drugs, sex and cigarettes



A comparison of the ways that Melvin Burgess's novel *Junk* and J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* present the struggle of young people to come to terms with the world in which they live.

Candidate number:

Word count: 3997

2. Abstract


I formed my research question as a statement: "A comparison of the ways that Melvin Burgess's novel *Junk* and J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* present the struggle of young people to come to terms with the world in which they live." I chose these two books because they are about teenagers' lives without parents. In my essay I tried to look deeper into these books and understand how the time differences can affect people's perception about parents, rules and drugs. These books are similar because the main action is in the street. The teenagers run away from their parents' home and schools. They want to be masters of their life. RO ✓

In my essay I tried to figure out their dreams, hopes, failures and problems, and to find out what was the most important thing for teenagers, which helped them when they were in trouble. Also I compared the writing style and narrative point of view of each novel. ✓

I concluded that M. Burgess's style was more interesting than J. D. Salinger. For us, readers are easier to understand and feel everything when you can see the same event from different views. Both authors used street language but it wasn't rude or something. They conveyed the language, which was used at that time. I think that the language affects reader's imagination. I realized that in both books love was the only thing which gave inspiration and more power to fight for their dreams. I also concluded that the language, time period, teenagers' lifestyle and love, affect each person differently. It doesn't matter who are you loving, your mother, father, grandma, boy or girl, love always finds a way to help you. correct ✓

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A comparison of the ways that Melvin Burgess's novel *Junk* and J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* present the struggle of young people to come to terms with the world in which they live.

1. Introduction

I have chosen this topic for my Extended Essay because this subject is very relevant for young people. Adolescence is the time when every teenager is confused and tries to find his own way in this life. These two books show the dark side of life and convince young people to not choose this lifestyle. I will try to investigate life without parents, when teenagers choose to start a new life in the streets. I'll compare their reasons for why they left their home, the new lifestyle, their crises, hopes, dreams and language. I hope I will find the answer for my research question. Mervin Burgess and J.D. Salinger openly show scenes of sex, drugs, and real street life (life without parents, no control, no rules, just drugs, sex and freedom). None of the detail was hidden from the readers. These two books are written in different years and in different continents. That's why the language, human behavior and rebellion are different. Mervin Burgess's novel *Junk* is a love story between two teenagers and heroin. The main theme in this book is love, in different words it was "dandelion". Dandelion was Tar and Gemma's love symbol. In J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* the main symbol is the catcher. It is Holden's dream. Every teenager in these two books wanted to change their lives so it would be a better place for them to live in. But they chose the wrong way to fix it... First, they should overcome all problems and not run from them.

Salinger?

Some context though not clear or appropriate

2. Background

J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (TCITR) was written in 1951. This novel is about a teenager named Holden Caulfield. He was expelled from his fourth school because he failed his exams. In this book the narrator is talking about teenage confusion, and rebellion against all rules in life. When the author is talking about something that the main character hates or dislikes, he uses words like: goddam, morons, crap, phony etc. H. Caulfield tells his own story about his life when he left the school and stayed in hotels, and how he felt in different situations.

Mervin Burgess's novel *Junk* was published in 1996. This controversial story is about two fourteen year old teenagers, Tar and Gemma, who run away from their parents' homes. Tar ran away from a violent father and a mother, who was an alcoholic. Gemma's parents didn't use violence against her, but they controlled her life very strongly. She was restricted by their crazy rules. So they both wanted to change their lives and start everything from the beginning. They started their own life in Bristol, England together with some squatters. But their life turned upside down when they met two sixteen year old teenagers who were addicted to heroin. Then into their life came new things like prostitution, shoplifting and heroin addiction.

Plot

3. The background that causes the young people to run away

Holden Caulfield hated his school. Actually he hated all schools in the world. He didn't like teachers, how they taught and also the guys who were studying in these schools. He thought that they almost all were morons who thought only about themselves. One night in the school he realized that he is tired of his entire life and now was a perfect time to change everything. That night he and his roommate Stradlater had a fight about a girl. Holden never liked him but it was the first time when he couldn't control himself. This night helped him to decide what he wanted to do. He wanted to leave the school, but in the beginning he did not want to go back home. "I didn't want to be around when they *first* got it. My mother gets very hysterical." (TCITR: p.45) He was afraid of his parents' reaction when they received a letter from school with a message that he had been expelled. "Besides, I sort of need a little vacation. My nerves were sort. They really were." (TCITR: p.45) Holden invented a lot of explanations why he needed to leave school that minute. Always when he was doing something stupid, he had excuses for what he was doing.

In M. Burgess's *Junk*, Tar was a fourteen year-old boy, whose dad used violence against him because he tried to help his alcoholic mother. A fourteen year-old child should be protected and be loved by his parents. He shouldn't be the only person, who tries to keep whole family together. Tar (his real name was David) did all his mother's jobs at home because he thought that it was the only way to save his mother from his dad's reproaches. Unfortunately it didn't help. Mother was one of the main reasons why he left his home. His friends supported him: "' Best thing you could do for her, clear off. She won't have anything to tie her to the old bastard then.' " (Junk: p.5) Even though Tar tried to convince himself and everyone around him that the main reason why he left home was his dad, he still deep in his heart knew that it was both of his parents' fault: "It was so terrible him saying that it was her who drove me away, because it wasn't true at all. It was him who drove me away. But ... it was true, too." (Junk: p.67)

Gemma's situation was different. Her parents were authoritarian people. They created a lot of rules for her because they didn't like Tar. She was so angry at them: "Someone ought to give parents lessons before they allow them to breed." (Junk: p.7) Of course she loved her parents but at that time she thought that they were insane. Gemma even compared her dad with Tar's dad:

“The difference between Tar’s dad and my dad is that Tar’s dad is basically a reasonable bloke who forgets to be reasonable, even if it is in rather a big way. Whereas my dad’s basically an unreasonable bloke who never forgets just how much you can get away with by *appearing* to be reasonable.” (Junk: p.10)

Also she thought that her dad was too strict to her. However, she knew how to come to terms with him. She knew his weakest sides and used them against him. Furthermore, she abandoned her parents because she wanted to make them angry. It was a kid’s game, which ended not exactly as she expected.

*some background
here ->*

4. The milieu and lifestyle into which they move

You could think if any teenager left school and didn't go home, he probably would end on the street, but Holden didn't. He went to a hotel like a real adult. Unfortunately, he chose the wrong hotel. For Holden, the hotel was full of very strange people: "I saw one guy, a gray-haired, very distinguished-looking guy [...] he took out all these women's clothes, and put them on." (TCITR: p.55) Or "Then, [...] I saw a man and a woman squirting water out of their mouths at each other." (TCITR: p.55) Holden Caulfield felt really bad there and said: "I'm not kidding, that hotel was lousy with perverts. I was probably the only normal bastard in the whole place – and that isn't saying much." (TCITR: p.55) It made him sadder than he was before. Also the bar didn't cheer up him because he couldn't get any alcohol. For a teenage boy alcohol is a very important thing and he felt humiliated. He felt better when he saw three ladies and asked them to dance with him. He was so happy when he was dancing with the blonde because she was such a good dancer:

"Well – where I have my hand on your back. If I think there isn't anything underneath my hand – no can, no legs, no feet, no *anything* – then the girl's really a terrific dancer." (TCITR: p.64)

Dancing was very important thing for him. He would almost always fall in love with a girl, who is a good dancer. It was one of the things which he liked. However, the environment in which he moved wasn't as nice as he expected to be. This milieu didn't teach him how to be a better person.

The street. Just one word but in our minds it raises the idea of people with old dirty clothes, teenagers' fights, drugs and prostitution. That's life in the streets. Life like this isn't a good place for children to live in. Tar knew that after some nights spent on the street. There are always people, and no privacy. People are always staring. No one likes this feeling: "I began to feel like something in a zoo." (Junk: p.29) That's why he found an old, abandoned house with a lot of trash inside and decided to stay there rather than on the street. He believed that one day everything would be okay. And he was right. One day his life began to go the right way: Gemma decided to leave her parents' house and started to live with him; a tobacconist found him a place to live. Tar started to live with three people, who were anarchists. One of them was Richard: "He's a strange

? relevance?

what's up with them?

person, Richard. Very friendly but – he’s always smiling but he never actually seems to look straight at you, for some reason.” (Junk: p.39) Richard decided to take Tar into his new house and provide him with a real, normal home. Tar had never met anyone like that, so he felt happy about it: “It was the best luck I ever had in my life. It wasn’t just the house, it was the people.” (Junk: p.58) So Tar and Gemm stayed there for a while because Gemma always imagined a different life without adults. She wanted to have fun, drink, and do whatever she wanted to do. That’s why she became so happy when they met two sixteen year old teenagers, Lily and Rob. They lived as they wanted. After a while these four teenagers started to live together. It was the beginning of a new life, in which they were confronted with the reality of life.

*mostly
Pilot
Bottle analysis*

5. The crises which they face

Every teenager imagines that life without parents is fantastic. There is no control, no rules, no duties of the child, nothing which can disturb you. Now you are master of your life. They seem to only see the positive side of this life and just when they start to be responsible for themselves, they realize that this situation is not as perfect as they imagined. In J. D. Salinger's "The Catcher in the Rye" the main character is confronted with some basic problems. One of the problems is loneliness. Although he tried to spend some time with people, go to the bars and nightclubs, he still often felt lonely and depressed. He wanted to talk with someone, but he always found a reason why he couldn't do that with people, who were around him. So he did something else: "What I did, I started talking, sort of out loud, to Allie. I do that sometimes when I get very depressed." (TCITR: p.89) He knew that talking with a dead person is not normal, but he still did it because after talking, he felt better for a while. Unfortunately, sometimes people from your own family can hurt you. For example, in M. Burgess's *Junk*: Tar's mother always made him feel bad: "You don't know my mum, she can make you do *anything*. I'm more scared of her than I am of Dad, really." (Junk: p.34) After each call with his mother, Tar felt worse and worse. She knew how to manipulate him. However, being far away Tar learnt how to resist her manipulation. Identify

In *The Catcher in the Rye* the loneliness wasn't the only problem. Holden was short of money. He was a prodigal person: "I'm a goddam spendthrift at heart. What I don't spend, I lose. Half the time I sort of even forget to pick up my change, at restaurants and night clubs and all." (TCITR: p.97) Although, he took some money for his "holiday" he never counted it. Holden Caulfield spent his free time as he wanted. He ordered drinks, stayed at hotels and drove in taxicabs. Also when he met two nuns he gave them a lot of money for charity. But he still thought it wasn't enough. The money never made him happy, even if he did a good deed. Only once was he happy, when he bought an old record for his little sister: show

"It was a very old, terrific record that this colored girl singer, Estelle Fletcher, made about twenty years ago.... If a white girl was singing it, she'd make it sound *cute* as hell, but old Estelle Fletcher knew what the hell she was doing, and it was one of the best records I ever heard." (TCITR: p.104)

He felt so happy because this record was hard to get. He never regretted this purchase. In Burgess's novel *Junk* money wasn't a big problem. Even though Tar and his friends didn't have hard to find

money, they always found a way to get it. They didn't value money because they knew that they could get almost everything without it.

Holden had another problem with prostitution. He was still a boy when he bought the service of prostitute. But the prostitute tricked him. She required more money than the elevator guy told him it would cost. Holden didn't give her what she was asking for. So she and Maurice, the elevator guy, came back for their money. Holden was very scared of them: "Boy, my voice was shaking like hell."^(TCITR: p.91) He ends up being punched by Maurice. All these experiences didn't make him happier than he was. He didn't realize that life without adults could be so heavy sometimes. Everyone is trying to teach you how to live. Unfortunately, no one can protect you from making your own mistakes. A similar situation occurs in the novel *Junk*. Another mistake in Tar and Gemma's life was their friendship with Lily and Rob. Because of them, Tar and Gemma became addicted to heroin, started shoplifting and provided services as prostitutes.

"It's all right, Tar, try it. You don't have to do it ever again if you don't want to. But try it once. Try everything once. All that stuff you hear about one little hit and you're a junkie for life is just stories, you know."^(Junk: p.183)

While Lily was addicted to heroin, she taught him that heroin isn't a bad thing. Tar was just a boy and didn't know anything about that life. "What could I say? I felt I was just beginning to learn how to live."^(Junk: p.185) Neither Tar nor Gemma had their own rules and priorities. They both imagined life differently. Tar wanted to be a good guy and help at home, while at the same time Gemma wanted to have fun, dance, and not have another boring family. "I wasn't going to stop, not for him, not for you, not for anyone."^(Junk: p.122) She was one of the rebels in this world, so one day she chose the free and fun life without Tar. Tar's love for Gemma was so great that he still defended her: "'She just wants to fly,' I said. 'She has to walk before she can run, let alone fly,' said Vonny. But I want to fly, too'"^(Junk: p.175) They were two kids who wanted to be free and happy. Sadly, they both were so naive. They believed that they could stop using drugs anytime they wanted. Tar always reminded himself: "It'll be all right. I just have to remember I got away from my mum and dad. If I can escape from that, I can escape from anything."^(Junk: p.218) He was lying to himself. Tar thought he was strong and he always would be. He didn't know that life changes year by year and people change too. No one can stay at the same point forever.

Assignment is under

6. Their hopes and dreams

Holden wanted to be free and live his own life. He didn't want to live a normal, boring life like everyone else. He rarely imagined himself going to a job, having a wife and children. He had an interesting dream to be a Catcher. "What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff..." (TCITR: p.156) He didn't like adults, so he wanted children to always be children and to never grow up. The important question is why he didn't like adults? It is because he didn't like the rules, which they created, or maybe he hated that all adults were hiding real emotions and feelings? He couldn't accept the fact that his little sister is "going" to have an adult's life. His dead brother was still his ideal because he died young and in his memories the brother will always be a child. For Holden, the Catcher became a symbol of his refusal to grow up, as he didn't seem capable of finding love with someone who is "adult". Holden thought that if children could always be children then life would become better for everyone. So Holden decided that he should be the "catcher" and save children from falling over the cliff into becoming adult. Yes, that is what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. He had just one simple dream, but this dream was unrealistic.

In Burgess's *Junk*, Tar and Gemma wanted to feel freedom and be together. They wanted to run away from their problems. Tar was a romantic, nice boy with sweet dreams. He created a special gift for his lover. "I stood there staring at it, and had an idea for a painting. A dandelion – just one huge bright dandelion. [...] I was going to do it and put it on the wall of the squat for Gemma when she came." (Junk: p.28) Tar loved Gemma and always said "Dandelion" to her when he wanted to say "I love you" because in the beginning Gemma didn't love him and hearing these three words, was very hard for her. Tar was an intelligent guy and he did a lot of things to make her happy. When Tar had a big problem, he remembered his love for Gemma and knew that her love was the most important reason, which could solve the problems: "Dandelion, dandelion. That's what I believe in. It's the only thing can help me now." (Junk: p.309) Gemma decided to change her life when she felt that she was pregnant: "What was scaring me was, that little blob of jelly inside me seemed like the only thing worth anything I had in the whole world." (Junk: p.340) Everyone has their own dreams and reasons, which helps solve their problems. You just have to find out yours and everything will be okay.

The connection
is not clear

7. Human contact

Holden Caulfield was trying to show that he is sick of other people and to be alone is the best resort for him, but it wasn't true. The longer he stayed alone, the more he needed to talk to someone or just to be surrounded by people. He tried to live the adult's life but unfortunately it didn't work. Holden was convinced that only children are good people and only with them he can live. A different situation is shown in Burgess's *Junk*. People can't live alone. We always need someone next to us, who can help, listen, love or just be with us. Tar and Gemma belonged to each other:

"Sometimes when we were hiding behind the breakers with the crowd, he'd hold me so tight, I'd think he's not just holding me, he's holding on to me, like I'm stopping him from falling off." (Junk: p.22)

She had this feeling that Tar would not be himself without her. He would be a different guy. Tar knew that too, that's why he didn't want to hurt her and always tried to save her.

"And I thought that was magic. Loving someone. It's not you and it's not them. It's not in you, it's between you. It's bigger and stronger than you are." (Junk: p.309)

No one can distinguish two lovers except them. Tar and Gemma have each other but it wasn't enough. They still kept contact with their parents even though they didn't want to live with them.

Some attempt
is made to use
text ✓

8. Narrative Voices

J.D. Salinger chooses an interesting writing style. He decided that the main character should tell the whole story because this book is about him, so we can see everything from one side. The language, which he uses isn't very formal. When Holden is displeased he uses invectives, for example: "... I yelled at the top of my goddam voice, "*Sleep tight, ya morons!* I'll bet I woke up every bastard on the whole floor."^(TCITR: p.46) However, sometimes when he was thinking about other things, like the museum, he almost thinks like a philosopher and understands things like an adult.

"Nobody'd be different. The only thing that would be different would be *you*. Not that you'd be so much older or anything. It wouldn't be that, exactly. You'd just be different, that's all."^(TCITR: p.109)

There he seems a more educated and mature person. In the end we discover that H. Caulfield was in a psychologist's office, where he was telling his story. This fact is shocking. When we are reading this book we can't even imagine that the guy, who is telling the whole story, is a little bit crazy. It makes us think about this story again and look at the same things from a different angle. Now we can't be sure if it is real or a fiction story.

M. Burgess chose a lot of characters to tell the story. Almost everyone who is involved in these events tells their story in their own words and how he was feeling at that time. For us it is more interesting to read this book. Each person has their own opinion, dreams, and perception of the world. We can realize each person's values. The language is not literary, but there are not many invectives. As a result it is easy to read the book.

✓
a wide range of
topics w/ little focus
and minimal
support

9. Conclusion

Both Mervin Burgess's novel *Junk* and J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* were written for adults, but every teen should read them. I think that M. Burgess's "Junk" is the more interesting book. Maybe because of the book's writing style and that this book is more modern than J.D. Salinger's "The Catcher in the Rye". M. Burgess uses the interesting style of telling the story. When you are reading this book you should decide which side you are supporting. It helps to understand the novel easier. The idea of dandelion was really inspiring. You can see that you can express love in new words and give a new meaning to them. The author is not afraid to shock the audience, so he tells everything how it is and doesn't create a sweet fiction story. In *Junk* heroin and weeds are the main drugs used by teenagers, while in J.D. Salinger's book the alcohol is the main thing. J.D. Salinger chose a different writing style. We can see just one side and know one opinion about all events. Actually, this story is only about one boy. This boy lives in a world he doesn't like. Nothing can make him smile or be happy. His sister is only the person who makes him smile. His dream to be a catcher is unrealistic. In both stories love makes people better persons. Both authors use effective ways to show all street life and make the reader feel what the characters are feeling.

The RQ has some potential but
The essay relies a bit too much
on plot and then short pieces covering
a variety of topics somewhat related
to the novels. A clear argument is
difficult to discern. The only real
connection between novels is that they
involve teens who are troubled.
Perhaps there are other aspects of novels
to compare -

Not terribly convincing?

Bibliography

Books:

Melvin Burgess 1996 "Junk" Penguin Group, London, England

J. D. Salinger 1951 "The Catcher in the Rye" Penguin Group, London, England

Articles:

"Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*"

Critic: Yasuhiro Takeuchi

Source: Explicator 60, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 164-166

Literature Resource Center

"Melvin Burgess"

Literature Resource Center