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ANSWER SHEET  
FEUILLE DE RÉPONSES  
HOJA DE RESPUESTAS

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Question Question Pregunta	Examiner Examinateur Examinador
Q5.	<p>The prompt for this essay is a quote suggesting that a writer's work has not been heavily influenced by his life, or his experiences, social, cultural and historical background. This, however, appears to not be true. This paper shall attempt to discredit the <del>fact</del> <sup>viewpoint</sup> that an author can "disavow any essential connection between (his) life and what they (writes)." through discussion of two novels - The Great Gatsby, by F Scott Fitzgerald, and The Outsider, by Albert Camus. The influence of Fitzgerald's own social, cultural and historical background can be seen clearly through the themes in The Great Gatsby, the behaviour of the characters, and the setting of the text. In The Outsider, Albert Camus' absurdist <del>philosophy</del> <sup>viewpoint</sup> permeates his novel, through the protagonist Meursault, the themes presented in his novel, as well as certain events in it. <u>Personal background / cultural mind.</u></p> <p>The influence of Fitzgerald's life on his critically acclaimed novel, The Great Gatsby, is evident in a few aspects of it. Firstly, it can be seen that Fitzgerald's</p>

The "lost generation" of 1920s America referred to those who had fought ~~lived~~ through World War I. They were a generation of disillusioned, restless people, with no <sup>real</sup> desire to find motivation or meaning in life and no desire to pursue such things <sup>either</sup> ~~either~~. Instead, a life of frivolous and endless partying was what consumed most. Fitzgerald himself had fought in the war, and was known to lead a lifestyle of partying and drinking. This, likewise, is seen in The Great Gatsby. The narrator of the novel, Nick Carraway, had remarked in chapter 1 that he "came back restless" from the war, while Daisy <sup>had very</sup> ~~had~~ and ~~was~~ superficial concerns, such as the "butler's nose" or watching for "the longest day of the year". She even ~~laid~~ <sup>laid</sup> together with her aristocrat husband, Tom, they "drifted around wherever people played polo and were rich", even moving to France for a year once for "no apparent reason". Apart from the wealthy upper class, the newly-rich also did not seem to have a sense of purpose in their lives too. This is seen through the masses of people Fitzgerald describes as "moths gathering" at Gatsby's lavish house parties, and their concern with gossip about Gatsby — ~~regard~~ <sup>and his image</sup> whether he killed a man, or went to Oxford. Overall, the sense of purposelessness and concern with frivolous matters and a lifestyle of constant partying can be seen in The Great Gatsby.

likely explain effect of mythic feeling





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Question Question Pregunta	<p>and this parallels the last generation that Fitzgerald himself was part of, and his purposeless lifestyle of heavy drinking and partying. As such, it is sensible to say that it is therefore evident that Fitzgerald's own life and social and cultural background had an influence on the portrayal of the characters in The Great Gatsby. ✓ A</p> <p>Another important theme in The Great Gatsby that was clearly influenced by Fitzgerald's own social, cultural and historical background is the American dream, or rather the decay of the American dream. The American dream was a popular philosophy in the 1920s that anyone could achieve success through sheer hard work. That, however, proved to be too idealistic, and the originally lofty and noble idea decayed into nothing but the blind pursuit of material wealth. Fitzgerald belonged to the age of the American dream, and watching its pursuits, perhaps not only by others but himself, influenced the novel greatly — The American dream is arguably one of the key central themes of the novel. The</p>	Examiner Examinateur Examinador
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valley of ashes.

Jay Gatsby represented the idealistic American dream, and the portrayal of his dream, the "colossal vitality of his illusion" reflects Fitzgerald's own view of the ideals of the popular American dream of his time and Gatsby believed in the "orgastic future that recedes us" and in the novel his dreams went beyond merely being able to win back the love of his life, Daisy, but also involved recreating the past and creating an entire "platonic conception of himself", disregarding entirely Gatsby's beginnings as the son to "unsuccessful, shiftless" farm people. Unfortunately, however, Gatsby's grand and ideal vision eventually never came to pass, and ended tragically in nothing but the amassment of huge amounts of wealth and his own death, as Gatsby <sup>could not</sup> ~~was not~~ and never was able to recreate the past or seek the "orgastic future" that Nick Carraway described. Gatsby's & intensely idealistic dream reflects the ideals of the American dream in Fitzgerald's time, <sup>and</sup> ~~while~~ its decay represents Fitzgerald's own viewpoint that ~~no~~ it descended into nothing but the blind pursuit of wealth. Furthermore, Fitzgerald's own life clearly parallels certain parts of Gatsby's - like Gatsby, Fitzgerald too was in love with a woman named Zelda, and was not able to obtain her hand in marriage until he

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became wealthy after the success of his novel, just as Gatsby thought he could win Daisy over by amassing his fortune. Like Gatsby, Fitzgerald too had fought in the war. Hence, it is apparent that Fitzgerald's own experiences and social, cultural and historical background influenced his novel greatly.

Lastly, the division between the "old rich" and "new rich" was that is apparent in The Great Gatsby is reflective of the social context that Fitzgerald was living in. The old rich, or those who had been born into their wealth, looked down on the new rich, or those who had only recently become wealthy, seeing them as gaudy, uncultured and flashy. Likewise, this idea is reflected in the novel. The West Egg, where Gatsby lived, is described as "less fashionable" than East Egg, where Tom and Daisy Buchanan, members of the wealthy upper class live. The disdain of the old rich towards the new rich is also seen in events in the novel — where Tom and Daisy do not enjoy the

him", when Gatsby took ~~Mr~~ Mr Sloane's female companion's invitation to supper literally. ~~once more~~ <sup>division of</sup> the influence of the social classes of Fitzgerald's time is seen clearly in his novel.

In Albert Camus' novel, *The Outsider*, his life influences his work mainly through his absurdist viewpoint. Camus' personal life involved living through a period of war where he watched his father die, and played a crucial role in the development of his absurdist view that despite humans having an intense desire for ~~him~~ meaning in life to exist, there indeed was no meaning in life and that happiness can be attained by accepting this fact. This is seen ~~firstly~~ through the character of Meursault.

Meursault clearly holds an absurdist view just as Camus does. The death of his mother does not seem to affect him, as seen in "mother died today or maybe yesterday. I don't know", because it did not matter to him when his mother died — the fact was that she would die eventually, and that it was ~~in~~ consequential as life would go on, "naturally". Throughout the whole novel, all of Meursault's actions he felt, "didn't matter" — the fact that he did not cry at his mother's funeral, drank coffee and smoked cigarettes ~~at her~~ <sup>when</sup> at her funeral, ~~he was at the~~ <sup>at her funeral,</sup> care.

develop in  
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watched a comedy film the day after her funeral, or even his killing of the Arab. None of it really mattered to Meursault. Eventually, these seemingly meaningless actions lead to the Meursault's death penalty, and while Meursault is adversely affected by this, he realises eventually that it didn't matter whether he died "now or thirty years later", as "mankind would go on for thousands and millions of years." He accepted the "benign indifference of the world" and that was when he was truly able to attain happiness. The character of Meursault is Camus' mouthpiece, and echoes his philosophy about the lack of meaning in life and the attainment of happiness once one accepted the fact clearly. Camus' personal view intensely influenced the protagonist, Meursault, of *The Outsider*. Additionally, Camus' life experiences influenced his novel as through *The Outsider* he was making a commentary about society. Through *The Outsider*...

conventions and expectations will be punished for doing so. This is seen clearly in Meursault's trial, where the prosecutor uses his unconventional actions of not ~~gri~~ showing grief at his mother's death to sentence him to death, ~~instead~~. It is Meursault's lack of sadness or grief that led him to death, instead of his actual crime of killing an Arab. There is nothing wrong with his actions, but clearly because what he does does not conform to societal expectations of showing extreme remorse and grief at the death of one's "author of life", the prosecutor is able to condemn Meursault for being an "immoral monster" and someone with "no soul". Camus, through Meursault, presents his personal views on society and the consequences of not conforming, and in so doing shows us that his life and opinion did indeed impact his novel.

Lastly, Meursault's life influenced the setting of the novel. ~~He~~ The novel was set in Algiers, where he lived in, and there are also mentions of Arab people in The Outsider, which is significant as it has direct relevance to the French-Arab conflict which formed the cultural, social, and historical context of Camus' time. The Arabs in the novel are merely described as "arabs" and







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not given a name or identity. Their actions show themselves as perhaps belonging to a lower rung of society. This is seen when Mersault is visited by Marie in jail, and while everyone was talking at the top of their voices, the Arab prisoners and their visitors were "crouched down" and "speaking in hushed voices". The portrayal of the Arabs is reflective of the French-Arab conflict of Camus' time, and perhaps even reflected his view on the Arabs, since as a French, he probably would not have taken a liking to them. As such it can be seen again that Camus' own life did influence his novel.

In conclusion, I disagree ~~to a large extent~~ with the quote that there is no essential connection between a writer's ~~work~~ life and his work. It can be clearly seen in both Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Albert Camus' *The Outsider* that their personal experiences, as well as the social, cultural and historical context <sup>they</sup> ~~background of the time the time the novel was written~~