Write about ideas of captivity and imprisonment in *Affinity* with reference to at least two other texts you’ve studied for this module.

Throughout this essay, I will explore the depiction of psychological and physical captivity and its impact on character in Sarah Waters' *Affinity*\(^1\), Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*\(^2\) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*\(^3\)

All three texts showcase physical and mental imprisonment and captivity. Set in Millbank prison, *Affinity* depicts the captivity that the characters feel in their lives. Suffering with mental illness, Margaret Prior feels cloistered in a life where she is expected to follow the gender role expected by her mother whilst the 'medium' Selina Dawes is literally confined for her deception. In *Great Expectations*, Miss Havisham is a captive of society as imprisons herself in her own home after being jilted at the alter. Finally, Henry Jekyll in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is metaphorically imprisoned by the expectations of society, turning to drugs to release his inner desires.

In *Affinity*, Margaret Prior suffers with mental illness as she lives in a depressive state. She talks about the times where 'two years ago, [she] took a draught of morphia, meaning to end [her] life. [Her] mother found [her] before the life was ended [...] they had only pulled [her] back to Hell.'\(^4\) Prior's mental illness keeps her imprisoned within her own anxiety which consumes her. Like Jekyll becoming Hyde, her desires are released once she meets Selina

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4 Waters, *Affinity*, p. 321
Dawes. Margaret lives through the character of Dawes, who is a more outgoing, risqué character, unafraid to speak her mind. During Margaret's interactions with Selina, we start to see Margaret act more out of her own character and take risks in her love for Selina which also makes her feel more 'freedom than [she has] ever had at any time in [her] life'.

According to Claire O'Callaghan, Waters, 'through Margaret […] dramatises the Victorian home as a particular space of enclosure for queer subjects' and this also conveys how repressive Victorian society was. According to Foucault, amongst the Victorian bourgeoisie 'sexuality was carefully confined; it moved into the home' which was where is constantly surrounded by her previous love, Helen. When Helen and Margaret are conversing, it is easy for the reader to understand that Helen is afraid of people finding out that she was in a homosexual relationship when calling Margaret 'brave' and 'original' which depicts how homosexuality in Victorian times was thought as a topic that Foucault describes as: if 'too visible, it would be designated accordingly and would have to pay the penalty.' This is reflected in Waters' presentation of the two homosexual characters whose sexuality is confined within their own homes. Waters describes Selina and Margaret exchanging secret touches whilst in Selina's cell at Millbank prison, and Margaret's conversing with Helen and the gifts from Selina that 'mysteriously' appear in Margaret's bedroom suggest that Margaret's sexuality is confined to the bedroom - the bedroom being the place that sexuality could be shown during the Victorian era. In Affinity, the character of Selina Dawes uses Margaret's homosexuality to hold power over her. Foucault shows that there is 'the problem with relations of power and sex' which is what can be seen in the relationship of Selina and

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5 Waters, Affinity, p. 257
8 Waters, Affinity, p. 204
9 Foucault, The History of Sexuality, p. 4
10 Foucault, The History of Sexuality, p. 83
Margaret. Without Margaret's knowledge, Selina is sexually blackmailing Margaret so that Selina can escape from jail. Foucault's 'Cycle of Prohibition' also shows that to 'renounce yourself or suffer the penalty of being suppressed; do not appear if you do not want to disappear.' Here, Foucault is saying that if you show your sexuality in society, it is automatic that you will be repressed: if you do not 'come out' then you will not be repressed. In *Affinity*, Margaret 'comes out' to Helen and Selina and her love for them is used against her as Helen - afraid of her sexuality - marries a man, and Selina uses Margaret's sexuality to get out of jail. Even though Margaret describes herself as 'free' whilst she is with Selina, she does not know that she is the exact opposite. Margaret is constantly under Selina's power of seduction and is Selina's captive. The roles are reversed throughout the whole novel: the jailed woman is free to use Selina to her will, and the free woman is jailed by a fraud.

Miss Havisham - in *Great Expectations* - is physically confined, reflecting of what Keller suggests is 'the patriarchal environment of nineteenth century England [which] viewed women as weak and naïve creatures who should submit to the dictates of men.' The physical confinement is a condition of Miss Havisham's psychological confinement which also is part of the social constraints upon women at the time, which Kathryn Hughes suggests were 'that women were considered physically weaker yet morally superior to men … [and] best suited to the domestic sphere' However, Miss Havisham was no use in the domestic sphere as she had no man to look after, therefore her status in society would be even lower than that of a domestic wife.

11 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 84
Foucault's theory of discipline and surveillance shows that the bodies that we live in and how we think are constantly being controlled by society; there's a 'formation of a disciplinary society […] that is a sort of social "quarantine"'\textsuperscript{14} which means that society is a quarantine in itself and that society is a form of discipline that 'makes it possible to bring the effects of power to the most minute and distant elements'\textsuperscript{15}. Due to Miss Havisham being left at the alter at her wedding, she has been 'quarantined' herself in a house that Dickens describes as having 'a great many iron bars […] Some of the windows had been walled up.'\textsuperscript{16} Miss Havisham's seclusion from society is being forced by society's norms and expectations of women during the Victorian era but her seclusion is also self-imposed as she chooses to stay inside her 'lifeless'\textsuperscript{17} house, still dressed in her 'long white veil and […] bridal flowers'\textsuperscript{18}.

Society's discipline is a power that can reach the farthest corners and the smallest subcultures and still have the power to influence their ideologies so that they start to conform to the dominant ideology. Miss Havisham does not have to stay inside her house, but she feels like she has to because she does not want to be watched and judged by the people around her. Foucault's theory of discipline and surveillance also links with Althusser's theory of the 'false consciousness'. Miss Havisham's isolation is evidence of her 'submit[ting] to a higher authority, […] stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting [her] submission.'\textsuperscript{19}

The 'higher authority' being dominant ideology and societal norms, which were that 'women

\textsuperscript{15} Foucault, 'Discipline and Punish', pp. 206-207
\textsuperscript{16} Dickens, \textit{Great Expectations}, p. 55
\textsuperscript{17} Dickens, \textit{Great Expectations}, p. 94
\textsuperscript{18} Dickens, \textit{Great Expectations}, p. 57
were left at home all day to oversee the domestic duties\textsuperscript{20} according to Hughes. Because Miss Havisham is not a wife, the 'disciplinary society' has stripped her of any social ranking and Miss Havisham has stripped herself of her freedom by remaining inside her house being surrounded by her wedding items. By remaining inside her house, Foucault suggests that her 'soul is the prison of [her] body\textsuperscript{21} and is the 'instrument of political anatomy'\textsuperscript{22} which mean that the soul is the way society gains power and how it can control you. Miss Havisham is imprisoned within her own mind because of her anxiety of the outside world not accepting her, which keeps her locked up inside her house. Her house can also be seen as her soul, as the house is her prison. Her family are allowed to visit on one day: her birthday. Miss Havisham does not 'suffer those who were here just now, or anyone, to speak of it. They come here on the day, but they dare not refer to it\textsuperscript{23} as her relatives are pretending to be concerned with how Miss Havisham is, they are just feigning it to be polite. Miss Havisham reciprocates this fake politeness as she does not stop to talk to her relatives, she '[keeps] going round and round the room: now, brushing against the skirts of the visitors.'\textsuperscript{24} In order to save herself from being judged from her relatives and the rest of society, Dickens describes Miss Havisham as her '[secluding] herself from a thousand natural and healing influences; that, her mind, brooding solitary, had grown diseased\textsuperscript{25} Miss Havisham has assimilated the constraints of society by excluding herself from the world and we realise just how long she has locked herself away when she asks Pip whether '[he is] afraid of a woman who has never

\textsuperscript{21} Foucault, 'Discipline and Punish', p. 177
\textsuperscript{22} Foucault, 'Discipline and Punish', p. 177
\textsuperscript{23} Dickens, Great Expectations, p. 89
\textsuperscript{24} Dickens, Great Expectations, p. 87
\textsuperscript{25} Dickens, Great Expectations, p. 399
seen the sun since the day [he was] born?²⁶ which reiterates how long Miss Havisham has kept herself a prisoner in her own home.

In *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Henry Jekyll escapes the claustrophobic and imprisoned morality of Victorian life through the creation of an alter-ego through which he can act out his own immoral fantasies. Victorian life was claustrophobic due to the amount of repression that was forced upon society by the dominant ideology that women were inferior to men, homosexuality was abhorrent, so society did not feel like there was enough room to explore with their thoughts. Due to Jekyll feeling suffocated by society, he takes a drug that allows him to separate his middle-class self from his 'savage'²⁷ and 'pure evil'²⁸ side, which is his 'devil [that] had been longed caged'²⁹ In his essay, 'The Subject and Power', Foucault describes the word 'subject' as being an individual who is a 'subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to one's own identity by a conscience'³⁰ Henry Jekyll is both the subject of Hyde because Hyde is the dominant personality, yet he is also tied to the identity of Hyde because of them being the same person and therefore dependent on him. However, when he learns that his other identity is Henry Jekyll, he starts to enjoy this wild side to himself more and want to 'step into the said Henry Jekyll's shoes without further delay'³¹. This repressed identity of Jekyll is supported by Freud's theory of the uncanny where we are not in control of our own actions or words and when our repressed memories and feelings are shown, it's through our sub-conscious because at this point, we are not in control

²⁶ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, p. 58
²⁷ Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p. 15
²⁸ Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p. 58
²⁹ Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p. 64
³¹ Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p. 11
of our own language. Edward Hyde is Jekyll's subconscious identity which eventually overpowers Jekyll himself. The commonalities between Stevenson's *The Body Snatcher* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* shows that Stevenson could have had repressed feelings of his own with the subject of identity, and is subconsciously sharing a part of him through his work because - as Sigmund Freud states in his essay, "The Uncanny": "uncanny" certain things [can be seen] within the boundaries of what is "fearful" which can also be seen as 'the fear of the unknown'. Throughout *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *The Body Snatcher*, there is a reoccurring theme of being scared of the unknown when Jekyll's friends and Jekyll himself is scared of Hyde and in *The Body Snatcher*, Fettes is scared of the unknown person who is murdering people so that they can examine their bodies later on.

There is also an underlying sub-text of homosexuality throughout the novella. There are no women in this text and the one woman that was present was killed by Hyde which shows that Jekyll's subconscious wants to rid of women and wants to keep his intimate group of male friends. Having the constant theme of homosexuality also depicts that Stevenson utilizes this to convey how Jekyll uses Hyde to express his own animalistic desires which - Robert Mighall in the introduction to *A Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* states - 'appear to be carefully plotted to point to, without actually specifying, a suspicion that some erotic attachment is at the bottom of Jekyll's relationship with Hyde' The 'central idea, resides in the collective consciousness and how Jekyll cannot take the feeling of losing control of himself anymore so he tries to stop taking the drug and Stevenson describes that when '[the] evil influence had been withdrawn, a new life began for Dr. Jekyll. He came out of his

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33 Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p. xix
34 Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p. ix
What Hyde did not realise that the drug itself was not the thing doing him harm, it was Hyde himself that had become Jekyll's drug: '[he] began to be tortured with throes and longings and [...] in an hour of moral weakness [...] [he] swallowed the transforming draught' During the BBC documentary *Ian Rankin Investigates: Dr. Jekyll an Mr. Hyde*, Rankin suggests that 'Edward Hyde is not a monster, but the part of Dr. Jekyll that has been liberated from society's constraints'; it is the part of Jekyll that allows him to explore a different side to his identity and lets him live out his life in the way that he could not as the middle-class doctor that he was. This is conveyed towards the middle of the book, when Jekyll loses control on when he physically changes to Mr. Hyde and 'the character of Edward Hyde had become irrevocably [his]' Jekyll knows that himself and Hyde are the same person but he still 'believes that he is personally absolved from all of Hyde's crimes' which depicts that Jekyll is living vicariously through his second identity. At the end of the novella, Jekyll kills Hyde; he kills the side of him that allowed him to explore his sexuality, that allowed him to divulge in different pleasures. By killing himself, Jekyll was repressing his own desires.

Imprisonment is showcased throughout the three books in two different ways: imprisonment of the body and imprisonment of the mind. Whilst writing this essay, I have noticed that imprisonment of the mind is far more prominent throughout all three books as they all feel that Victorian society is repressing them and their desires: Miss Havisham's desire to take out

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35 Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p. 31
36 Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p. 63
37 Richard Downes (2007) *Ian Rankin Investigates: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* [online] Available at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007qyzv] [Accessed on 19 December 2016]
38 Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p. 62
39 Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p. xvi
revenge on all men, Margaret's desire to express her sexuality yet also her desire to die and finally, Henry Jekyll's desire to explore the depths of his personality and his sexuality.

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