**IB Literature Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

***Text in Context: Composing the Reflective Statement***

**Stage 1: The Interactive Oral**

The discussions should address the following cultural and contextual considerations:

• In what ways do time and place matter to this work?

• What was easy to understand and what was difficult in relation to social and cultural context and issues?

• What connections did you find between issues in the work and your own culture(s) and experience?

• What aspects of technique are interesting in the work?

**Stage 2: The Reflective Statement**

The reflective statement is a short writing exercise and should be completed as soon as possible following the interactive oral. Each student is asked to provide a reflection on each of the interactive orals. The reflective statement on the same work as the student’s final assignment is submitted for assessment.

The reflective statement must be based on the following questions:

* **How was your understanding of cultural and contextual considerations of the work developed through the interactive oral?**
* In what ways do time and place matter in the text?
* What was easy to understand and what was difficult in relation to social and cultural context and issues?
* What connections did you find between issues in the text and your own culture(s) and experience?
* What aspects of technique are interesting in the text?

Formal requirements: Length 300–400 words. If the limit is exceeded, assessment will be based on the first 400 words.

Submission: The reflective statement about the work used in the student’s final assignment (essay) is submitted together with the assignment. A handwritten reflective statement is entirely acceptable.

Assessment: The reflective statement is awarded a mark out of 3 using assessment criterion A.

Administration: All reflective statements must be kept on file at the school.

**The rationale for the inclusion of a reflective statement in the process of producing the final essay.**  
The reflective statement is intended to insure that all students are encouraged to construct their own synthesis of reading and background, or to clarify uncertainties and confusions about the culture of the work with which they may have struggled. In combination, the interactive oral and the reflective statement are the groundwork for sensible and sensitive appreciation of the “otherness” that students are likely to encounter in works in translation.

**To what extent does the student show how his or her understanding of cultural and contextual elements was developed through the interactive oral?**

**Note:** The word limit for the reflective statement is 300–400 words. If the word limit is exceeded, 1 mark will be deducted.

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| **Marks** | **Level descriptor** |
| 0 | The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below. |
| 1 | Reflection on the interactive oral shows superficial development of your understanding of cultural and contextual elements. |
| 2 | Reflection on the interactive oral shows some development of your understanding of cultural and contextual elements. |
| 3 | Reflection on the interactive oral shows development of your understanding of cultural and contextual elements. |

Two Short Sample Reflective Statements

Response to the discussion of Murakami’s context *(The Wind Up Bird Chronicle)*

Initially I was struck by the discussion catalyzed by Rosalyn and Shruti’s “confrontation.” It seemed quite clear and valid Murakami would be accused of dismissiveness of Japanese culture and history. His works often celebrate Western cultures, especially musical references to jazz and opera, reflecting an idealizing that seems very un-Japanese. However, as the presentation continued, I found myself challenged by what Guojun and Landon were saying. They discussed Japanese historical elements included in the novel.

As they went over his references to historic Japanese icons, often expressed in the characters’ names, I began to understand Murakami’s angle a little more. Rather than utilize a more classical approach to the incorporation of Japanese culture in his novels, he strives to find that subtle balance between Western criticism (seen in many of the characters’ war stories) and acceptance of Japan’s rich and often dark history. His references to both cultures are sometimes clear and sometimes subtle. Overall I found the presentation quite enlightening, and my perspective is both altered and broadened, seeing Murakami’s endeavor to blend Japanese and Western culture.

Response to the discussion of Kadare’s context (*Broken April)*

An interesting proposition brought forth by this context presentation was the nature of Kadare’s rhetorical agenda. After presenting examples of abominable practices around the world, the group was able to show that peoples’ views on others’ traditions, laws, and cultures are highly subjective. This position evolved to suggest that perhaps Kadare uses this novel to expose what seem appalling practices to force us to look at our own cultures and their practices about such things as death sentences, stoning women for adultery, and the like.

I feel this possible impulse is further supported by how Kadare shapes the characters in the novel. Gyorg seems like a helpless, sensitive individual. Kadare forces the audience to sympathise with those affected by the Kanun's devastating effects. Furthermore he makes relatable characters of Diana and Bessian in that he pulls us out of a city culture and has us enter the culture of the Kanun along with them, making for culture shock for both characters and audience. By these methods, Kadare forces reflection and conclusions that are suggested by this presentation.