**Exemplar Q3 response (Specialist Writing Option C-Whiplash)**

**Explore how one example of specialist writing on the chosen film you have studied has deepened your understanding of the film.**

**Refer to at least one sequence from your chosen film to illustrate your answer.**

**In your answer, you should:**

* **Briefly describe one key idea from the example of specialist writing you have studied.**
* **Outline what this key idea suggests about your chosen film.**
* **Show how this idea compares with your own views on the film (use one sequence from your chosen film to illustrate this). [15]**

One key idea from option C is the theme of **masculinity**. The writer suggests that masculinity is a key theme because the narrative explores the conflict between two male characters for **supremacy**. At the start of the film Andrew, the protagonist, is a naïve, vulnerable and sensitive young man, driven by a desire to be a great drummer. **Juxtaposed** against him is Fletcher, an aggressive, brutal **alpha male** intent on finding the next Charlie Parker. The clash of personalities leads to a violent and shocking fight for **dominance** amongst two men determined to prove their masculinity.

A sequence which exemplifies this is the dramatic **finale** where Andrew finally proves himself to be a superb drummer as well as Fletcher’s equal. The scene begins with Andrew as the underdog; presented in soft lighting and in the background both literally and metaphorically. A series of **shot reverse shots** convey his shock as he realizes Fletcher has manipulated him into playing as an act of revenge for Andrew’s disloyalty. **Close ups** of Andrew’s stunned face are **juxtaposed** against Fletcher’s smug dominance and controlled **body language**. At this stage Fletcher has once again taken charge and his dominance is undeniable. Later, when Andrew returns to the stage the roles are reversed. A **medium shot** of Fletcher attempting, but failing to halt Andrew’s playing with his fist raised symbolizes the **power** shift – Andrew is now the **alpha male** and he ignores Fletcher, instead telling him he’ll ‘count him in’, thereby reasserting his masculinity.

Andrew gives a bravura performance as the **diegetic** drumming increases in **tempo** and difficulty. Fletcher slowly begins to assist rather than obstruct and the two men finally become a team rather than competing for the role of ‘top dog’.

Andrew’s stony **facial expression** and **high key lighting** portray him as determined and tenacious. In contrast, **low key lighting**, and then darkness, envelop Fletcher, Andrew is now ‘the man’ and has achieved his own **personal masculine utopia** whilst also gaining the respect of the **uber-macho** Fletcher.