

**Victorian Certificate of Education
2019****LITERATURE
Written examination****Monday 11 November 2019****Reading time: 11.45 am to 12.00 noon (15 minutes)****Writing time: 12.00 noon to 2.00 pm (2 hours)****TASK BOOK****Structure of book**

<i>Section</i>	<i>Number of questions</i>	<i>Number of questions to be answered</i>	<i>Number of marks</i>
A	30	1	20
B	30	1	20
			Total 40

- Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners and rulers.
- Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper, correction fluid/tape and dictionaries.
- No calculator is allowed in this examination.

Materials supplied

- Task book of 68 pages, including **assessment criteria** on page 68
- One or more answer books

The task

- You are required to complete two pieces of writing: one for Section A and one for Section B.
- Each piece of writing must be based on a text selected from the list on pages 2 and 3 of this task book.
- Each selected text must be from a different category (novels, plays, short stories, other literature, poetry). You must **not** write on two texts from the same category. Students who write on two texts from the same category will receive a score of zero for one of their responses.

Instructions

- Write your **student number** in the space provided on the front cover(s) of the answer book(s).
- In the answer book(s), indicate which section you are responding to and the text number of your selected text.
- All written responses must be in English.

At the end of the examination

- Place all other used answer books inside the front cover of the first answer book.
- You may keep this task book.

Students are NOT permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any other unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.

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3.	Italo Calvino	<i>Baron in the Trees</i>	4	12–13
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5.	Elizabeth Gaskell	<i>North and South</i>	4	16–17
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13.	Toni Morrison	<i>Desdemona</i>	5	32–33
14.	Yasmina Reza	<i>Art</i>	5	34–35
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16.	William Shakespeare	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	5	38–39
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20.	Ceridwen Dovey	<i>Only the Animals</i>	5	46–47
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26.	Tina Chang, Nathalie Handal and Ravi Shankar (eds)	<i>Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from the Middle East, Asia, and Beyond</i>	6	58–59
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30.	Petra White	<i>A Hunger</i>	6	66–67
Assessment criteria				68

SECTION A – Literary perspectives**Instructions for Section A**

You are required to complete **one** piece of writing in response to the topic set for **one** text.

Your selected text must be used as the basis for your response to the topic. You are required to produce an interpretation of the text using one literary perspective to inform your view.

Your selected text for Section A must be from a different category than your selected text for Section B.

In the answer book, indicate which section you are responding to and the text number of your selected text.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 68 of this book.

Section A is worth 20 marks.

Novels**1. Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey***

Austen's *Northanger Abbey* uses an unconventional heroine to expose society's focus on appearances. Discuss.

2. Robyn Cadwallader, *The Anchoress*

Cadwallader's *The Anchoress* suggests that relationships shape people. To what extent do you agree?

3. Italo Calvino, *Baron in the Trees*

In Calvino's *Baron in the Trees*, individual freedom is valued more than the demands of society. Discuss.

4. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is disturbing because it questions what it means to be civilised. To what extent do you agree?

5. Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*

Consider the proposition that Gaskell's *North and South* presents change as challenging but essential.

6. Christina Stead, *The Man Who Loved Children*

In Stead's *The Man Who Loved Children*, Sam's wife and children can only be themselves when they directly oppose him. To what extent do you agree?

7. Juan Gabriel Vásquez, *The Sound of Things Falling*

The central characters in Vásquez's *The Sound of Things Falling* are damaged 'innocents' with a lack of control over their lives. Discuss.

8. Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion*

Reflect on the idea that, in Winterson's *The Passion*, nothing is ever quite what it seems.

9. Alexis Wright, *Carpentaria*

Wright's *Carpentaria* shows how people's rivalries can blind them to more significant dangers. To what extent do you agree?

Plays

10. Andrew Bovell, *Speaking in Tongues*

In Bovell's *Speaking in Tongues*, a sense of unease and dissatisfaction is evident in the lives of the characters. Discuss.

11. Shelagh Delaney, *A Taste of Honey*

In Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*, the characters are affected by prejudice as much as by poverty. To what extent do you agree?

12. Euripides, *Hippolytus*

Reflect on the idea that the mortal characters in Euripides's *Hippolytus* are victims of their own choices.

13. Toni Morrison, *Desdemona*

In Morrison's *Desdemona*, the desire for reconciliation is stronger than the sense of betrayal. To what extent do you agree?

14. Yasmina Reza, *Art*

Reza's *Art* suggests that relationships can fall apart because each person has their own way of seeing. Discuss.

15. William Shakespeare, *Othello*

In Shakespeare's *Othello*, the title character's tragic fall is a result of his failure to understand himself. To what extent do you agree?

16. William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*

In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, love has the power to disrupt. To what extent do you agree?

17. Sam Shepard, *Buried Child*

Consider the proposition that, in Shepard's *Buried Child*, the family is destroyed by secrecy.

18. Tennessee Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

In Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, the characters are isolated by their fears. To what extent do you agree?

Short stories

19. Maxine Beneba Clarke, *Foreign Soil*

In *Foreign Soil*, Clarke's stories explore human restlessness and a need for peace. Discuss.

20. Ceridwen Dovey, *Only the Animals*

Reflect on the idea that the stories in Dovey's *Only the Animals* expose the flaws in human beings.

21. Nikolay Gogol, *The Diary of a Madman, The Government Inspector and Selected Stories*

Gogol's *The Diary of a Madman, The Government Inspector and Selected Stories* shows readers that appearances can be misleading. To what extent do you agree?

Other literature

22. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *My Father's Daughter: Memories of an Australian Childhood*

Fitzpatrick's *My Father's Daughter: Memories of an Australian Childhood* suggests that people cannot escape the influence of their parents. Discuss.

23. Voltaire, *Candide, or Optimism*

Voltaire's *Candide, or Optimism* suggests that, in times of adversity, people are extremely resilient. To what extent do you agree?

24. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* suggests that challenging society's expectations is essential for social progress. Discuss.

Poetry

25. Robert Browning, *Selected Poems*

Reflect on the idea that the misuse of power is strongly condemned in Browning's *Selected Poems*.

26. Tina Chang, Nathalie Handal and Ravi Shankar (eds), *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from the Middle East, Asia, and Beyond*

In *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from the Middle East, Asia, and Beyond*, identity is shaped by forces beyond the individual's control. Discuss.

27. Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*

Consider the proposition that, in Plath's *Ariel*, the speakers present a bleak and unjust world with only fleeting moments of joy.

28. Chris Wallace-Crabbe, *New and Selected Poems*

Central to Wallace-Crabbe's poetry in *New and Selected Poems* are relationships between people and connections with places. Discuss.

29. Samuel Wagan Watson, *Smoke Encrypted Whispers*

In Watson's *Smoke Encrypted Whispers*, modern urban culture is presented as an ugly and awkward intrusion upon Australia. Discuss.

30. Petra White, *A Hunger*

Reflect on the idea that a searching examination of the 'self' is at the heart of White's poems in *A Hunger*.

SECTION B – Close analysis**Instructions for Section B**

You are required to complete **one** piece of writing based on **one** text in response to the task set.

Three passages have been set for every text. The set passages are presented in the order in which they appear in the nominated version of the text. The set passages are also reproduced as they appear in the nominated version of the text.

You must use **two or more** of the set passages as the basis for a discussion about the selected text.

In your response, refer in detail to the set passages and the selected text. You may include minor references to other texts.

Your selected text for Section B must be from a different category than your selected text for Section A.

In the answer book, indicate which section you are responding to and the text number of your selected text.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 68 of this book.

Section B is worth 20 marks.

Novels

1. Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Northanger Abbey*.

1.

Here they were interrupted by a request from Mrs. Thorpe to Mrs. Allen, that she would move a little to accommodate Mrs. Hughes and Miss Tilney with seats, as they had agreed to join their party. This was accordingly done, Mr. Tilney still continuing standing before them; and after a few minutes consideration, he asked Catherine to dance with him. This compliment, delightful as it was, produced severe mortification to the lady; and in giving her denial, she expressed her sorrow on the occasion so very much as if she really felt it, that had Thorpe, who joined her just afterwards, been half a minute earlier, he might have thought her sufferings rather too acute. The very easy manner in which he then told her that he had kept her waiting, did not by any means reconcile her more to her lot; nor did the particulars which he entered into while they were standing up, of the horses and dogs of the friend whom he had just left, and of a proposed exchange of terriers between them, interest her so much as to prevent her looking very often towards that part of the room where she had left Mr. Tilney. Of her dear Isabella, to whom she particularly longed to point out that gentleman, she could see nothing. They were in different sets. She was separated from all her party, and away from all her acquaintance;—one mortification succeeded another, and from the whole she deduced this useful lesson, that to go previously engaged to a ball, does not necessarily increase either the dignity or enjoyment of a young lady. From such a moralizing strain as this, she was suddenly roused by a touch on the shoulder, and turning round, perceived Mrs. Hughes directly behind her, attended by Miss Tilney and a gentleman. “I beg your pardon, Miss Morland,” said she, “for this liberty, —but I cannot any how get to Miss Thorpe, and Mrs. Thorpe said she was sure you would not have the least objection to letting in this young lady by you.” Mrs. Hughes could not have applied to any creature in the room more happy to oblige her than Catherine. The young ladies were introduced to each other, Miss Tilney expressing a proper sense of such goodness, Miss Morland with the real delicacy of a generous mind making light of the obligation; and Mrs. Hughes, satisfied with having so respectably settled her young charge, returned to her party.

Miss Tilney had a good figure, a pretty face, and a very agreeable countenance; and her air, though it had not all the decided pretension, the resolute stilishness of Miss Thorpe’s, had more real elegance. Her manners shewed good sense and good breeding; they were neither shy, nor affectedly open; and she seemed capable of being young, attractive, and at a ball, without wanting to fix the attention of every man near her, and without exaggerated feelings of extatic delight or inconceivable vexation on every little trifling occurrence. Catherine, interested at once by her appearance and her relationship to Mr. Tilney, was desirous of being acquainted with her, and readily talked therefore whenever she could think of any thing to say, and had courage and leisure for saying it.

* * *

2.

“Northanger is not more than half my home; I have an establishment at my own house in Woodston, which is nearly twenty miles from my father’s, and some of my time is necessarily spent there.”

“How sorry you must be for that!”

“I am always sorry to leave Eleanor.”

“Yes; but besides your affection for her, you must be so fond of the abbey!—After being used to such a home as the abbey, an ordinary parsonage-house must be very disagreeable.”

He smiled, and said, “You have formed a very favourable idea of the abbey.”

“To be sure I have. Is not it a fine old place, just like what one reads about?”

“And are you prepared to encounter all the horrors that a building such as ‘what one reads about’ may produce?—Have you a stout heart?—Nerves fit for sliding pannels and tapestry?”

“Oh! yes—I do not think I should be easily frightened, because there would be so many people in the house—and besides, it has never been uninhabited and left deserted for years, and then the family come back to it unawares, without giving any notice, as generally happens.”

“No, certainly.—We shall not have to explore our way into a hall dimly lighted by the expiring embers of a wood fire—nor be obliged to spread our beds on the floor of a room without windows, doors, or furniture. But you must be aware that when a young lady is (by whatever means) introduced into a dwelling of this kind, she is always lodged apart from the rest of the family. While they snugly repair to their own end of the house, she is formally conducted by Dorothy the ancient housekeeper up a different staircase, and along many gloomy passages, into an apartment never used since some cousin or kin died in it about twenty years before. Can you stand such a ceremony as this? Will not your mind misgive you, when you find yourself in this gloomy chamber—too lofty and extensive for you, with only the feeble rays of a single lamp to take in its size—its walls hung with tapestry exhibiting figures as large as life, and the bed, of dark green stuff or purple velvet, presenting even a funereal appearance. Will not your heart sink within you?”

“Oh! but this will not happen to me, I am sure.”

* * *

Novels

1. Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*

3.

The next morning brought the following very unexpected letter from Isabella:—

Bath, April—

My dearest Catherine,

I received your two kind letters with the greatest delight, and have a thousand apologies to make for not answering them sooner. I really am quite ashamed of my idleness; but in this horrid place one can find time for nothing. I have had my pen in my hand to begin a letter to you almost every day since you left Bath, but have always been prevented by some silly trifler or other. Pray write to me soon, and direct to my own home. Thank God! we leave this vile place to-morrow. Since you went away, I have had no pleasure in it—the dust is beyond any thing; and every body one cares for is gone. I believe if I could see you I should not mind the rest, for you are dearer to me than any body can conceive. I am quite uneasy about your dear brother, not having heard from him since he went to Oxford; and am fearful of some misunderstanding. Your kind offices will set all right:—he is the only man I ever did or could love, and I trust you will convince him of it. The spring fashions are partly down; and the hats the most frightful you can imagine. I hope you spend your time pleasantly, but am afraid you never think of me. I will not say all that I could of the family you are with, because I would not be ungenerous, or set you against those you esteem; but it is very difficult to know whom to trust, and young men never know their minds two days together. I rejoice to say, that the young man whom, of all others, I particularly abhor, has left Bath. You will know, from this description, I must mean Captain Tilney, who, as you may remember, was amazingly disposed to follow and tease me, before you went away. Afterwards he got worse, and became quite my shadow. Many girls might have been taken in, for never were such attentions; but I knew the fickle sex too well. He went away to his regiment two days ago, and I trust I shall never be plagued with him again. He is the greatest coxcomb I ever saw, and amazingly disagreeable. The last two days he was always by the side of Charlotte Davis: I pitied his taste, but took no notice of him. The last time we met was in Bath-street, and I turned directly into a shop that he might not speak to me;—I would not even look at him. He went into the Pump-room afterwards; but I would not have followed him for all the world. Such a contrast between him and your brother!—pray send me some news of the latter—I am quite unhappy about him, he seemed so uncomfortable when he went away, with a cold, or something that affected his spirits. I would write to him myself, but have mislaid his direction; and, as I hinted above, am afraid he took something in my conduct amiss. Pray explain every thing to his satisfaction; or, if he still harbours any doubt, a line from himself to me, or a call at Putney when next in town, might set all to rights. I have not been to the Rooms this age, nor to the Play, except going in last night with the Hodges's, for a frolic, at half-price: they teased me into it; and I was determined they should not say I shut myself up because Tilney was gone. We happened to sit by the Mitchells, and they pretended to be quite surprized to see me out. I knew their spite:—at one time they

could not be civil to me, but now they are all friendship; but I am not such a fool as to be taken in by them. You know I have a pretty good spirit of my own. Anne Mitchell had tried to put on a turban like mine, as I wore it the week before at the Concert, but made wretched work of it—it happened to become my odd face I believe, at least Tilney told me so at the time, and said every eye was upon me; but he is the last man whose word I would take. I wear nothing but purple now: I know I look hideous in it, but no matter—it is your dear brother's favourite colour. Lose no time, my dearest, sweetest Catherine, in writing to him and to me,

Who ever am, &c.

Such a strain of shallow artifice could not impose even upon Catherine.

* * *

Novels

2. Robyn Cadwallader, *The Anchoress*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *The Anchoress*.

1.

A cat jumped in through the maids' window as Anna spoke, strutted through my cell, sniffing at this and that, and scratched at the few dry strands of straw in front of the fireplace. She circled, lay down in the nest she had made, and began licking the rain off her legs and paws.

Anna laughed as she turned away. 'She knows where's like to be dry.'

I would not have a cat in here. How could a cat, a creature of the outside world, stay in this place, a place of death in life? Careful of her claws I picked her up, hissing 'Scat!' as I dropped her back through the window. A short time later I noticed her back by the fireplace, curled up asleep, her damp fur turning to orange fluff, her head on her paws but tilted toward me as if she had dozed off as she watched me read.

'Scat!' I threw her out again and again, and always she came back, through the maids' window or the parlour window, whichever was open, or squeezing tight through the narrow squint. For days I fought with her, making sure the doors and windows were closed, even asking Anna to be sure the church door stayed shut, determined that nothing would come inside my four walls to distract me. Still the cat found a way. In tears of frustration, I'd throw her out, then would look up from reading to see her asleep in her nest of straw.

When Father Peter next visited, the cat jumped past me and onto the ledge of the parlour window, poking her head through the curtain, her tail quivering with pleasure, orange against the black cloth.

'I won't let the cat stay, Father. I've tried and tried to ...'

But, 'Hello puss,' I heard through the curtain, and then the hum of the cat's victory. 'You like to pray, do you? A holy cat, hmmm? Ah, child, a cat might be a gift, and you must have read in your Rule that a cat is permitted in an anchorhold. The priory has a family of cats that grows greater in number each year. We feed them scraps, they hang about the milking pails, gobble up the fish entrails, but most of all they catch the mice in the larder. Prior Walter shoos them from the chapel but they have ways of sneaking in under the seats. Does this one have a name?'

He laughed when I told him Scat suited her best, and she was used to it. He doesn't understand, I thought: the leper, Eleanor, and now Scat. Whether a cat was allowed or not, I wanted to keep the world out of my cell. But Scat had won.

* * *

2.

Ranulf thought of the voice behind the curtain: tears, anger, contrition, the sharp prickle of her questioning mind, the despair he turned away from. 'Why would Sir Geoffrey agree to another recluse, after such a failure?'

Peter turned his head again. 'I wondered that myself when I heard the story. But it's Prior Walter's duty to obey Abbot Wulfrum and to be a steward of God's provisions; to build the priory to God's glory, as he says. So we need an income, and the prior, as you know, can be persuasive. Death hovers around us all, but especially those of us who are old: me, Sir Geoffrey ... he knew he wasn't well. Perhaps the urgency to prepare for death, to think of his soul, to have someone to pray for him each day was compelling.' He began to wheeze.

'I should leave you,' Ranulf said, but stayed on his stool, the early morning light kneading some softness into the cold air, the only sounds Peter's straining breath and a shout or two from the men working outside. Ranulf had heard of Sir Geoffrey's stern ways when it came to money and land, but even powerful, wealthy men — perhaps those men more than others — worried about what they couldn't see or touch, especially when death began to stalk them. They wouldn't hesitate to lavish money on a patronage if it bought them a little reassurance in matters of the soul. A holy woman to pray for them, before and after death, would be a comfort, and some no doubt even thought of it as insurance.

'Besides,' Peter spoke again, 'this time Sir Geoffrey had less involvement. You know all this, of course. The corrody makes the anchoress entirely our responsibility: food, wood, spiritual care. Sir Geoffrey was still Sister Sarah's patron, but from a distance. And now, of course, Sir Thomas. If anything goes wrong, the land the priory received reverts to him. Sir Geoffrey no doubt felt it was worth it, for the sake of his soul. And maybe, who can say, he saw the patronage of a new anchoress as penance for the manner of Sister Isabella's departure.'

'But wasn't it her decision to leave? No cause to blame the lord?'

'Her decision was her own. I hear that she decided she was unsuited to the life. It was the manner of the unsealing of her cell that caused concern. There are stories.' Peter hesitated. 'The village loved her, but there's talk of anger, even violence as she left. Who knows what happened.'

Ranulf straightened on the tiny stool and peered at Peter. 'Violence? Towards an anchoress?'

'Apparently. Talk of what had happened was whispered widely in the village until the bishop came and threatened. Not exactly threatened, of course: he mentioned the shame such gossip would bring to Isabella and to the village. Words can bind us just as much as they can free us. They won't talk now, in the village.'

'Violence?' Ranulf repeated. 'But who?'

'Not Sir Geoffrey, I'm sure.' He looked intently at Ranulf. 'Our Mother Church protects us and her bishops keep order, but her anger is severe. You must be wise in this, Father Ranulf. Walk carefully for the sake of our sister ... and the young maid.'

* * *

Novels

2. Robyn Cadwallader, *The Anchoress*

3.

‘When I was a little bit older than you, I saw a jongleur at a market, and he could jump and tumble and fly through the air.’ I was startled at myself, at this story I knew. ‘I called him Swallow, because I thought that’s what he looked like. I wanted to be like him.’

‘Swallow, that’s a good name. What else could he do?’

‘He could dance and juggle and balance swords, and he told stories, but the thing I liked best was when three men stood in a line and two men stood on their shoulders, and then Swallow climbed up onto them, as if he was climbing a ladder. He stood tall, stretched out his arms like this, looked up at the sky and jumped, flew, did a somersault in the air.’

‘I’d be scared up that high.’

‘He wasn’t. He looked like he was flying, like he never had to come back to the ground, and he could never fall. That’s what I loved.’

‘So did he never fall, then?’

‘Well, he did once, he told me, and broke his nose.’

‘Like that bird that tried to fly and couldn’t.’

I didn’t answer, angry at her questions that made it seem so ordinary.

Eleanor ran her finger down a fold in the curtain, then poked at it to make it billow, as she always did, thinking. ‘Even though you wanted to be like Swallow, they made you come and stay here, in the dark. That’s mean.’

‘No, I’ve told you I wanted to come here. And I can leave, if I want to.’

‘Do you like the dark best, then?’

I told Eleanor it was time for her to go, and sat down on the straw beneath my parlour window, a blanket wrapped around me. Had I thought Swallow could never fall? Perhaps when I was ten, but I began to understand, as I crouched in my cell just why that leap had made me gasp. He dared himself in the air, knowing he could fall; that was what I loved. I thought I had come to the anchorhold daring everything — to look at the ground, to leap into the air, to face my death and go on living. But I had come like a bird taking fright and hiding in its nest, to be safe from my own body. I had given up Swallow’s chance of dying, and with it the chance to fly.

I looked down at the straw beneath my feet, shuffled it apart until I saw the dirt below. Father Ranaulf’s voice hung in my mind: *Don’t come to God and ask to be safe*. I slipped off my shoes, curled my toes into the soil.

* * *

Novels

3. Italo Calvino, *Baron in the Trees*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Baron in the Trees*.

1.

‘Where I am isn’t land and isn’t yours!’ proclaimed Cosimo [...] ‘Violante but they call me Viola.’

Italo Calvino, ‘Baron in the Trees’, in *Our Ancestors*, Archibald Colquhoun (trans.), Vintage, 1998

pp. 92 and 93

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

2.

Among the books he sent for [...] and no Cosimo will ever walk on the trees again.

Italo Calvino, ‘Baron in the Trees’, in *Our Ancestors*, Archibald Colquhoun (trans.), Vintage, 1998

pp. 172 and 173

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

Novels

3. Italo Calvino, *Baron in the Trees*

3.

She hurried to the house, packed her bags [...] this time Cosimo really had gone mad.

Italo Calvino, 'Baron in the Trees', in *Our Ancestors*,
Archibald Colquhoun (trans.), Vintage, 1998

pp. 246 and 247

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

Novels

4. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Heart of Darkness*.

1.

“[...] ‘After all,’ said the boiler-maker in a reasonable tone, ‘why shouldn’t we get the rivets?’ Why not, indeed! I did not know of any reason why we shouldn’t. ‘They’ll come in three weeks,’ I said, confidently.

“But they didn’t. Instead of rivets there came an invasion, an infliction, a visitation. It came in sections during the next three weeks, each section headed by a donkey carrying a white man in new clothes and tan shoes, bowing from that elevation right and left to the impressed pilgrims. A quarrelsome band of footsore sulky niggers trod on the heels of the donkey; a lot of tents, camp-stools, tin boxes, white cases, brown bales would be shot down in the courtyard, and the air of mystery would deepen a little over the muddle of the station. Five such instalments came, with their absurd air of disorderly flight with the loot of innumerable outfit shops and provision stores, that, one would think, they were lugging, after a raid, into the wilderness for equitable division. It was an inextricable mess of things decent in themselves but that human folly made look like the spoils of thieving.

“This devoted band called itself the Eldorado Exploring Expedition, and I believe they were sworn to secrecy. Their talk, however, was the talk of sordid buccaneers: it was reckless without hardihood, greedy without audacity, and cruel without courage; there was not an atom of foresight or of serious intention in the whole batch of them, and they did not seem aware these things are wanted for the work of the world. To tear treasure out of the bowels of the land was their desire, with no more moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe. Who paid the expenses of the noble enterprise I don’t know; but the uncle of our manager was leader of that lot.

“In exterior he resembled a butcher in a poor neighbourhood, and his eyes had a look of sleepy cunning. He carried his fat paunch with ostentation on his short legs, and during the time his gang infested the station spoke to no one but his nephew. You could see these two roaming about all day long with their heads close together in an everlasting confab.

“I had given up worrying myself about the rivets. One’s capacity for that kind of folly is more limited than you would suppose. I said Hang!—and let things slide. I had plenty of time for meditation, and now and then I would give some thought to Kurtz. I wasn’t very interested in him. No. Still, I was curious to see whether this man, who had come out equipped with moral ideas of some sort, would climb to the top after all, and how he would set about his work when there.”

* * *

2.

“[...] The reaches opened before us and closed behind, as if the forest had stepped leisurely across the water to bar the way for our return. We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness. It was very quiet there. At night sometimes the roll of drums behind the curtain of trees would run up the river and remain sustained faintly, as if hovering in the air high over our heads, till the first break of day. Whether this meant war, peace, or prayer we could not tell. The dawns were heralded by the descent of a chill stillness; the woodcutters slept, their fires burned low; the snapping of a twig would make you start. We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet. We could have fancied ourselves the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and of excessive toil. But suddenly, as we struggled round a bend, there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage. The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy. The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us—who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. We could not understand, because we were too far and could not remember, because we were travelling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign—and no memories.

“The earth seemed unearthly. We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there—there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly, and the men were—No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it—this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled, and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity—like yours—the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. [...]”

* * *

Novels

4. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

3.

“[...] I didn’t say to myself, ‘Now I will never see him,’ or ‘Now I will never shake him by the hand,’ but, ‘Now I will never hear him.’ The man presented himself as a voice. Not of course that I did not connect him with some sort of action. Hadn’t I been told in all the tones of jealousy and admiration that he had collected, bartered, swindled, or stolen more ivory than all the other agents together. That was not the point. The point was in his being a gifted creature, and that of all his gifts the one that stood out pre-eminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence, was his ability to talk, his words—the gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness.

“The other shoe went flying unto the devil-god of that river. I thought, By Jove! it’s all over. We are too late; he has vanished—the gift has vanished, by means of some spear, arrow, or club. I will never hear that chap speak after all—and my sorrow had a startling extravagance of emotion, even such as I had noticed in the howling sorrow of these savages in the bush. I couldn’t have felt more of lonely desolation somehow, had I been robbed of a belief or had missed my destiny in life. . . . Why do you sigh in this beastly way, somebody? Absurd? Well, absurd. Good Lord! mustn’t a man ever—Here, give me some tobacco.” . . .

There was a pause of profound stillness, then a match flared, and Marlow’s lean face appeared—worn, hollow, with downward folds and dropped eyelids, with an aspect of concentrated attention; and as he took vigorous draws at his pipe, it seemed to retreat and advance out of the night in the regular flicker of the tiny flame. The match went out.

“Absurd!” he cried. “This is the worst of trying to tell . . . Here you all are, each moored with two good addresses, like a hulk with two anchors, a butcher round one corner, a policeman round another, excellent appetites, and temperature normal—you hear—normal from year’s end to year’s end. And you say, Absurd! Absurd be—exploded! Absurd! My dear boys, what can you expect from a man who out of sheer nervousness had just flung overboard a pair of new shoes. Now I think of it, it is amazing I did not shed tears. I am, upon the whole, proud of my fortitude. I was cut to the quick at the idea of having lost the inestimable privilege of listening to the gifted Kurtz. Of course I was wrong. The privilege was waiting for me. Oh yes, I heard more than enough. And I was right, too. A voice. He was very little more than a voice. And I heard—him—it—this voice—other voices—all of them were so little more than voices—and the memory of that time itself lingers around me, impalpable, like a dying vibration of one immense jabber, silly, atrocious, sordid, savage, or simply mean, without any kind of sense. Voices, voices—even the girl herself—now——”

He was silent for a long time.

“I laid the ghost of his gifts at last with a lie,” he began suddenly. “Girl! What? Did I mention a girl? Oh, she is out of it—completely. They—the women I mean—are out of it—should be out of it. We must help them to stay in that beautiful world of their own, lest ours gets worse. [...]”

* * *

Novels

5. Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *North and South*.

1.

Mr Thornton knew the house. He had seen the advertisement, and been to look at it, in compliance with a request of Mr Bell's that he would assist Mr Hale to the best of his power: and also instigated by his own interest in the case of a clergyman who had given up his living under circumstances such as those of Mr Hale. Mr Thornton had thought that the house in Crampton was really just the thing; but now that he saw Margaret, with her superb ways of moving and looking, he began to feel ashamed of having imagined that it would do very well for the Hales, in spite of a certain vulgarity in it which had struck him at the time of his looking it over.

Margaret could not help her looks; but the short curled upper lip, the round, massive up-turned chin, the manner of carrying her head, her movements, full of a soft feminine defiance, always gave strangers the impression of haughtiness. She was tired now, and would rather have remained silent, and taken the rest her father had planned for her; but, of course, she owed it to herself to be a gentlewoman, and to speak courteously from time to time to this stranger; not over-brushed, nor over polished, it must be confessed, after his rough encounter with Milton streets and crowds. She wished that he would go, as he had once spoken of doing, instead of sitting there, answering with curt sentences all the remarks she made. She had taken off her shawl, and hung it over the back of her chair. She sat facing him and facing the light; her full beauty met his eye; her round white flexile throat rising out of the full, yet lithe figure; her lips, moving so slightly as she spoke, not breaking the cold serene look of her face with any variation from the one lovely haughty curve; her eyes, with their soft gloom, meeting his with quiet maiden freedom. He almost said to himself that he did not like her, before their conversation ended; he tried so to compensate himself for the mortified feeling, that while he looked upon her with an admiration he could not repress, she looked at him with proud indifference, taking him, he thought, for what, in his irritation, he told himself he was – a great rough fellow, with not a grace or a refinement about him. Her quiet coldness of demeanour he interpreted into contemptuousness, and resented it in his heart to the pitch of almost inclining him to get up and go away, and have nothing more to do with these Hales, and their superciliousness.

Just as Margaret had exhausted her last subject of conversation – and yet conversation that could hardly be called which consisted of so few and such short speeches – her father came in, and with his pleasant gentlemanly courtesousness of apology, reinstated his name and family in Mr Thornton's good opinion.

* * *

2.

Mrs Thornton and Fanny were in the dining-room; the latter in a flutter of small exultation, as the maid held up one glossy material after another, to try the effect of the wedding-dresses by candlelight. Her mother really tried to sympathize with her, but could not. Neither taste nor dress were in her line of subjects, and she heartily wished that Fanny had accepted her brother's offer of having the wedding clothes provided by some first-rate London dressmaker, without the endless, troublesome discussions, and unsettled wavering, that arose out of Fanny's desire to choose and superintend everything herself. Mr Thornton was only too glad to mark his grateful approbation of any sensible man, who could be captivated by Fanny's second-rate airs and graces, by giving her ample means for providing herself with the finery, which certainly rivalled, if it did not exceed, the lover in her estimation. When her brother and Mr Bell came in, Fanny blushed and simpered, and fluttered over the signs of her employment, in a way which could not have failed to draw attention from any one else but Mr Bell. If he thought about her and her silks and satins at all, it was to compare her and them with the pale sorrow he had left behind him, sitting motionless, with bent head and folded hands, in a room where the stillness was so great that you might almost fancy the rush in your straining ears was occasioned by the spirits of the dead, yet hovering round their beloved. For, when Mr Bell had first gone up-stairs, Mrs Shaw lay asleep on the sofa; and no sound broke the silence.

Mrs Thornton gave Mr Bell her formal, hospitable welcome. She was never so gracious as when receiving her son's friends in her son's house; and the more unexpected they were the more honour to her admirable housekeeping preparations for comfort.

'How is Miss Hale?' she asked.

'About as broken down by this last stroke as she can be.'

'I am sure it is very well for her that she has such a friend as you.'

'I wish I were her only friend, madam. I daresay it sounds very brutal; but here have I been displaced, and turned out of my post of comforter and adviser by a fine lady aunt; and there are cousins and what not claiming her in London, as if she were a lap-dog belonging to them. And she is too weak and miserable to have a will of her own.'

'She must indeed be weak,' said Mrs Thornton, with an implied meaning which her son understood well. 'But where,' continued Mrs Thornton, 'have these relations been all this time that Miss Hale has appeared almost friendless, and has certainly had a good deal of anxiety to bear?' But she did not feel interest enough in the answer to her question to wait for it. She left the room to make her household arrangements.

'They have been living abroad. They have some kind of claim upon her. I will do them that justice. The aunt brought her up, and she and the cousin have been like sisters. The thing vexing me, you see, is that I wanted to take her for a child of my own; and I am jealous of these people, who don't seem to value the privilege of their right. Now it would be different if Frederick claimed her.'

Novels

5. Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*

‘Frederick!’ exclaimed Mr Thornton. ‘Who is he? What right –?’ He stopped short in his vehement question.

* * *

3.

The parsonage was so altered, both inside and out, that the real pain was less than she had anticipated. It was not like the same place. The garden, the grass-plot, formerly so daintily trim that even a stray rose-leaf seemed like a fleck on its exquisite arrangement and propriety, was strewn with children’s things; a bag of marbles here, a hoop there; a straw-hat forced down upon a rose-tree as on a peg, to the destruction of a long beautiful tender branch laden with flowers, which in former days would have been trained up tenderly, as if beloved. The little square matted hall was equally filled with signs of merry healthy rough childhood.

‘Ah!’ said Mrs Hepworth, ‘you must excuse this untidiness, Miss Hale. When the nursery is finished, I shall insist upon a little order. We are building a nursery out of your room, I believe. How did you manage, Miss Hale, without a nursery?’

‘We were but two,’ said Margaret. ‘You have many children, I presume?’

‘Seven. Look here! we are throwing out a window to the road on this side. Mr Hepworth is spending an immense deal of money on this house; but really it was scarcely habitable when we came – for so large a family as ours I mean, of course.’ Every room in the house was changed, besides the one of which Mrs Hepworth spoke, which had been Mr Hale’s study formerly; and where the green gloom and delicious quiet of the place had conduced, as he had said, to a habit of meditation, but, perhaps, in some degree to the formation of a character more fitted for thought than action. The new window gave a view of the road, and had many advantages, as Mrs Hepworth pointed out. From it the wandering sheep of her husband’s flock might be seen, who straggled to the tempting beer-house, unobserved as they might hope, but not unobserved in reality; for the active Vicar kept his eye on the road, even during the composition of his most orthodox sermons, and had a hat and stick hanging ready at hand to seize, before sallying out after his parishioners, who had need of quick legs if they could take refuge in the ‘Jolly Forester’ before the teetotal Vicar had arrested them. The whole family were quick, brisk, loud-talking, kind-hearted, and not troubled with much delicacy of perception. Margaret feared that Mrs Hepworth would find out that Mr Bell was playing upon her, in the admiration he thought fit to express for everything that especially grated on his taste. But no! she took it all literally, and with such good faith, that Margaret could not help remonstrating with him as they walked slowly away from the parsonage back to their inn.

‘Don’t scold, Margaret. It was all because of you. If she had not shown you every change with such evident exultation in their superior sense, in perceiving what an improvement this and that would be, I could have behaved well. But if you must go on preaching, keep it till after dinner, when it will send me to sleep, and help my digestion.’

They were both of them tired, and Margaret herself so much so, that she was unwilling to go out as she had proposed to do, and have another ramble among the woods and fields so close to the home of her childhood. And, somehow, this visit to Helstone had not been all – had not been exactly what she had expected.

* * *

SECTION B – continued
TURN OVER

Novels

6. Christina Stead, *The Man Who Loved Children*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *The Man Who Loved Children*.

1.

“You’re up poring over a book [...] how could I pick out a woman who would hate me so much!”

Christina Stead, *The Man Who Loved Children*,
The Miegunyah Press, 2011

pp. 18 and 19

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2.

Sam swam up to the surface of the river [...] I am sorry that the kind of father I can be is limited.”

Christina Stead, *The Man Who Loved Children*,
The Miegunyah, Press 2011

pp. 209 and 210

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Novels

6. Christina Stead, *The Man Who Loved Children*

3.

“Clare and I are going on a walking trip [...] went cheerfully back to poke the fire under the copper.

Christina Stead, *The Man Who Loved Children*,
The Miegunyah Press, 2011

pp. 470 and 471

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Novels

7. Juan Gabriel Vásquez, *The Sound of Things Falling*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *The Sound of Things Falling*.

1.

I also learned that the hippopotamus had not escaped alone: at the time of his flight he'd been accompanied by his mate and their baby – or what, in the sentimental version of the less scrupulous newspapers, were his mate and their baby – whose whereabouts were now unknown and the search for whom immediately took on a flavour of media tragedy, the persecution of innocent creatures by a heartless system. And on one of those days, while following the hunt in the papers, I found myself remembering a man who'd been out of my thoughts for a long while, in spite of the fact that there had been a time when nothing interested me as much as the mystery of his life.

During the weeks that followed, the memory of Ricardo Laverde went from being a minor coincidence, one of those dirty tricks our minds play on us, to becoming a faithful and devoted, ever-present ghost, standing by my bed while I slept, watching from afar in the daylight hours. On the morning radio programmes and the evening news, in the opinion columns that everybody read and on the blogs that nobody read, everyone was asking if it was necessary to kill the lost hippos, if they couldn't round them up, anaesthetize them and send them back to Africa; in my apartment, far from the debate but following it with a mixture of fascination and repugnance, I was thinking more and more intensely about Ricardo Laverde, about the days when we'd known each other, about the brevity of our acquaintance and the longevity of its consequences. While in the press and on the TV screens the authorities listed the diseases that could be spread by an artiodactyl – and they used that word: *artiodactyl*, new to me – and in the rich neighbourhoods of Bogotá people wore T-shirts saying *Save the Hippos*, in my apartment, on long drizzly nights, or walking down the street towards the city centre, I began to think stubbornly about the day Ricardo Laverde died, and even to force myself to remember the precise details. I was surprised by how little effort it took me to summon up the words I had spoken or heard, things I'd seen, pain I'd suffered and now overcome; I was also surprised by the alacrity and dedication we devote to the damaging exercise of remembering, which after all brings nothing good and serves only to hinder our normal functioning, like those bags of sand athletes tie around their calves for training. Bit by bit I began to notice, not without some astonishment, that the death of that hippopotamus put an end to an episode of my life that had begun quite a while ago, more or less like someone coming home to close a door carelessly left open.

* * *

2.

Right now there is a chain of circumstances, of guilty mistakes or lucky decisions, whose consequences await me around the corner; and even though I know it, although I have the uncomfortable certainty that those things are happening and will affect me, there is no way I can anticipate them. Struggling against their effects is all I can do: repair the damage, take best advantage of the benefits. We know it, we know it very well; nevertheless it's always somewhat dreadful when someone reveals to us the chain that has turned us into what we are, it's always disconcerting to discover, when it's another person who brings us the revelation, the slight or complete lack of control we have over our own experience.

That's what happened to me over the course of that second afternoon at Las Acacias, the property formerly known as Villa Elena, whose name no longer suited it one fine day and had to be urgently replaced. That was what happened to me during that Saturday night when Maya and I were talking about the documents in the wicker chest, about every letter and every photo, about every telegram and every bill. The conversation taught me all that the documents hadn't confessed, or rather organized the contents of the documents, gave an order and a meaning and filled in a few of its gaps, although not all of them, with the stories that Maya had inherited from her mother in the years they lived together. And also, of course, with the stories her mother had made up.

'Made up?' I said.

'Oh, yeah,' said Maya. 'Starting with Dad. She invented him entirely, or rather, he was an invention of hers. A novel, understand? A flesh-and-blood novel, her novel. She did it because of me, of course, or for me.'

'You mean you didn't know the truth?' I said. 'Elaine didn't tell you?'

'She must have thought it would be better that way. And maybe she was right, Antonio. I don't have children. I can't imagine what it's like to have children. I don't know what a person might be capable of doing for them. My imagination doesn't stretch that far. Have you got kids, Antonio?'

Maya asked me that. It was Sunday morning, that day Christians call Easter and on which they celebrate or commemorate the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, who had been crucified two days before (more or less at the same time as I began my first conversation with Ricardo Laverde's daughter) and who from this moment on began to appear to the living: to his mother, to the Apostles and to certain women well chosen for their merit. 'Have you got kids, Antonio?'

* * *

Novels

7. Juan Gabriel Vásquez, *The Sound of Things Falling*

3.

The cool early morning filled up with Maya's weeping, soft and fine, and also with the singing of the first birds, and also with the sound that was the mother of all sounds, the sound of lives disappearing as they pitch over the edge into the abyss, the sound made by Flight 965 and all it contained as they fall into the Andes and that in some absurd way was also the sound of Laverde's life, tied irremediably to that of Elena Fritts. And my life? Did my own life not begin to throw itself to the ground at this very instant, was that sound not the sound of my own downfall, which began there without my knowledge? 'So you fell out of the sky, too?' the Little Prince asks the pilot who tells the story, and I thought yes, I'd fallen out of the sky too, but there was no possible testimony of my fall, there was no black box that anybody could consult, nor was there any black box of Ricardo Laverde's fall, human lives don't have these technological luxuries to fall back on. 'Maya, how is it that we're hearing this?' I said. She looked at me in silence (her eyes red and flooded, her mouth looking devastated). I thought she hadn't understood me. 'I don't mean . . . What I want to know is how this recording came . . . ' Maya took a deep breath. 'He always liked maps,' she said.

'What?'

'Maps,' said Maya. 'He always liked them.'

Ricardo Laverde had always liked maps. In school he always did well (always in the top three of his class), but he did nothing as well as he drew maps, those exercises in which the student had to draw, with a soft leaded pencil or a nib or a drawing pen, on tracing paper and sometimes on wax paper, the geographies of Colombia. He liked the sudden straight line of the Amazon trapezoid, he liked the tempered Pacific coast like a bow without an arrow, he could draw from memory the peninsula of La Guajira and blindfolded he could stick a pin in a sketch, as others might pin the tail on the donkey, without a second thought, to show the exact location of the Nudo de Almaguer. In all of Ricardo's scholastic history, the only calls from the discipline prefect came when they had to draw maps, for Ricardo would finish his in half the allotted time and for the rest of the class he'd draw his friends' maps in exchange for a 50-centavo coin, if it was a map of the political administrative division of Colombia, or a peso, if it was hydrography or a distribution of thermic levels.

'Why are you telling me this?' I said. 'What's it got to do with?'

When he came back to Colombia, after nineteen years in prison, and had to find work, the most logical thing was to look where there were planes. He knocked on various doors: flying clubs, aviation academies and found them all closed. Then, following a sort of epiphany, went to the Agustín Codazzi Geographical Institute. They gave him a couple of tests, and two weeks later he was flying a twin-engine Commander 690A whose crew was composed of pilot and co-pilot, two geographers, two specialized technicians and sophisticated

aero-photography equipment. And that's what he was doing for the last months of his life: taking off in the early morning from El Dorado Airport, flying over Colombian airspace while the camera in the back took 23 by 23 negatives that would eventually, after a long laboratory and classification process, end up in the atlases from which thousands of children would learn the tributaries of the River Cauca and where the Occidental Cordillera begins. 'Children like our children,' said Maya, 'if either of us ever has any kids.'

* * *

Novels

8. Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *The Passion*.

1.

We are on parade today [...] pleading with us to prove him right.

Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion*,
Vintage, 1996 (first published 1987)

pp. 23–25

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2.

To kiss well one must kiss solely [...] I would keep her card until she needed it.

Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion*,
Vintage, 1996 (first published 1987)

pp. 59 and 60

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Novels

8. Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion*

3.

Love, they say, enslaves [...] the geranium might never have come to France.

Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion*,
Vintage, 1996 (first published 1987)

pp. 154 and 155

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Novels

9. Alexis Wright, *Carpentaria*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Carpentaria*.

1.

With the clock in the bag, she was preparing to leave her little world of white paper and decaying foliage, when something else caught her eye. First of all she saw the base of the statue with a handwritten date – 1947. It had to be broken she thought, as she pushed the rubbish away, but found it was not even cracked, as she inspected a statue of the Virgin Mary. The statue looked old and the paint was chipped in places. Angel thought Norm might have some spare paint she could use to repaint the statue, particularly where the lines of gold and silver had disappeared on the cloak. The Virgin Mary was dressed in a white-painted gown and blue cloak. Her right hand was raised, offering a permanent blessing, while her left hand held gold-coloured rosary beads. Angel Day was breathless. ‘This is mine,’ she whispered, disbelieving the luck of her ordinary morning.

‘This is mine,’ she repeated her claim loudly to the assembled seagulls waiting around the oleanders. She knew she could not leave this behind either, otherwise someone else would get it, and now she had to carry the statue home, for she knew that with the Virgin Mary in pride of place, nobody would be able to interfere with the power of the blessings it would bestow on her home. ‘Luck was going to change for sure, from this moment onwards,’ she told the seagulls, because she, Mrs Angel Day, now owned the luck of the white people.

Not only would her family be able to tell the time, and be able to tell other poor outsider people like themselves what the time was, but they would also be prosperous. They would become like the white people who prayed and said they were of the Christian faith. This was the difference between the poor old Pricklebush people and Uptown. This was how white people had become rich by saving up enough money, so they could look down on others, by keeping statues of their holy ones in their homes. Their spiritual ancestors would perform miracles if they saw how hard some people were praying all the time, and for this kind of devotion, reward them with money. Blessed with the prophecy of richness, money befalls them, and that was the reason why they owned all the businesses in town.

The seagulls, lifting off all over the dump, in the mind-bending sounds they made seemed to be singing a hymn, *Glory! Glory, Magnificat*. The atmosphere was haunting, with steam rising from the ground, hovering birds in every direction, and she simply appeared from nowhere, walking out of the oleander.

* * *

2.

At this point Bruiser, sticking to his script, shut his mouth. He looked into the crowd with feigned innocence on his face. He searched the eyes for non-believers of the Christian faith. There had to be someone. Where? Where? Who was it going to be this time? Instead, to Valance’s astonishment, people started babbling all of their hidden prayers, praying loudly for Gordie. And Bruiser, whose scarred face usually gave him the impression of being a descendant from aliens, now looked different too. Valance was at a loss to understand what he had done to his face. He began to see what others were already seeing; it was like looking at a holy man.

‘Hush now folks,’ Bruiser finally spoke, repeating his request over and over, until he regained the full attention of the meeting. ‘Save your prayers for later folks, we have got a lotta hard work to do here first. First, we need to get organised with putting some men together, because we are going to arrest those little petrol sniffers who did this to Gordie, too right we are. Whose names we got coming now?’

The air bristled. Everyone knew what Bruiser was referring to. It was plain easy to reminisce the kind of yesterday antics of Will Phantom: arsonist, stirrer, troublemaker, cars running up and down the street in the middle of the night. So much trouble, fights and what have you, all because one person kept telling the world he did not want the mine to be built. The very building they were sitting in front of, the beautiful new Council offices, had replaced the one they all reckoned he burnt down. Someone had to have done it. It could not have burnt down by itself. Happily for everyone, the good neighbour mine came to the rescue. It honoured its word: said it was going to donate a brand-new building when it got the green light on Native title problems. They had Will Phantom to blame for that too. Well! It looked as though something like that was stirring its ugly head about race relations again.

‘Ya gotta nip it in the bud this time, ya hear me, ya honour?’

‘We aren’t gonna put up with that same trouble. Turning everyone inside out.’

‘No,’ Bruiser was the first to agree. ‘Just like I said. We will do it differently this time, won’t we?’

* * *

Novels

9. Alexis Wright, *Carpentaria*

3.

And Will Phantom was right to think he was lucky, leaning his skinny body out of the building, barely holding on to the doorway, and not caring if he fell, because any second he knew he could simply let go, with full certainty of falling straight into the destiny he had prescribed for himself. He had not figured fate, when the top floor under his feet suddenly moved. The floorboards had been shaken so violently, he was sent flying into the floodwaters. He hit the water hard, went under into the billowing yellow waters, where he rolled blindly *in vacuo* with the dead of the deep, before being returned in a frenzy of breathlessness to the surface. Somewhere, in all of that water sweeping him towards the sea, he was able to turn to see what had happened to his little oasis.

He saw not a hotel left far behind but a small castle for the recreation of spirits. This new reality had nothing to do with the order of man. There was no town of Desperance. It was gone. A monster followed him instead. The houses, the loading port, the boats and cars, every bit of every so-and-so's this or that, along with the remains of the pipeline for the ore from the mine, and even the barges and cargo snatched up by the cyclone had travelled inland, and were coming back. Every bit of it had been crushed into a rolling mountainous wall that now included the hotel where only moments ago, Will Phantom had been standing.

It was at this point he realised how history could be obliterated when the Gods move the country. He saw history rolled, reshaped, undone and mauled as the great creators of the natural world engineered the bounty of everything man had ever done in this part of the world into something more of their own making. Was he shocked? Bugger the hotel, he thought, it could go with the rest. The bulwark of the spirits rose from the waters, and he saw nothing monstrous or hideous in this new creation taking shape, moving, rolling, changing appearance, and beauty in its strident crashing back into the water.

The sight of the devastation was nothing short of salubrious as far as he was concerned. The macabre construction resembled a long-held dream of the water world below the ground where the ancient spirits of the creation period rested, while Aboriginal man was supposed to care for the land. He wrestled with thoughts of the future. When the waters receded what man would walk to the salt marsh to scratch the surface? What man digging under the surface, under layers of silt, would announce the discovery of the devil's polluted palace? Then his view was gone.

* * *

Plays

10. Andrew Bovell, *Speaking in Tongues*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Speaking in Tongues*.

1.

Two bars. The city.

Music rises ... a little sexy. Latin. Two couples are dancing. PETE and SONJA are in one bar. LEON and JANE are in the other. The dancing is close... and it's good, more than a simple shuffle. The dancing is identical. Both couples are like mirrors of the other. The lights fade on the couples dancing.

Two rooms. Cheap. Spartan. Faded.

SONJA and JANE enter. They look around the room. PETE and LEON follow. They look around the room. Each couple holds a stillness for a moment.

PETE/LEON: It's not much.

SONJA: It's what / I expected.

JANE: I expected—I don't know what I expected. It makes me feel / cheap.

SONJA: Cheap. Sordid.

PETE/LEON: Do you want to leave?

SONJA/JANE: No.

SONJA: I like it. / Do you?

JANE: Do you?

LEON: We could go somewhere else.

PETE: I'm not sure.

JANE: We're here now.

PETE: I'm sorry.

SONJA: Why?

PETE: It's just that / I haven't done this sort of thing before.

LEON: I haven't done this sort of thing before.

SONJA/JANE: Nor have I.

LEON looks at JANE. PETE looks at SONJA. They both look away. LEON and PETE each touch their heart.

LEON: I've got this pain in / my chest.

PETE: My chest is pounding.

SONJA/JANE: Are you alright?

PETE/LEON: Yes.

SONJA/JANE: Are you sure?

PETE: I said / I'm alright.

LEON: I'm alright.

PETE: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to snap.

JANE: You're not having / a heart attack?

SONJA: A heart attack is something I couldn't cope with / right now.

LEON: Right now I could do with / a drink.

PETE: A drink would go down well.

JANE: Do / you want to go back?

SONJA: You want to go / back?

LEON: Back to the bar?

PETE: No.

JANE: Yes.

LEON: No.

PETE: We're here now.

JANE: Good.

PETE: What would you do?

JANE: Because nor do I.

PETE: If I was having a heart attack?

SONJA: What?

LEON: Good.

PETE: If I was having a heart attack, what would you do?

SONJA: I'd get help.

PETE: It's just that / we hardly know each other.

JANE: We hardly know each other.

SONJA: I'd help a stranger.

PETE: Yes. But it would mean being found out. There would be an ambulance, perhaps police. I'm not sure, but you would have to explain.

SONJA: But if it was a matter of life and death.

JANE: I feel a little awkward.

PETE: Yes. I wasn't sure. For a moment I wasn't sure. / I'm sorry.

LEON: I'm sorry.

SONJA/JANE: Don't be.

PETE: It was a stupid thing to ask.

An awkward silence passes between them.

SONJA/JANE: Have you really never done this before?

PETE/LEON: No.

JANE: That's reassuring.

LEON: Why?

JANE: I don't know.

SONJA: I wish you had. I wish

JANE: I suppose

SONJA: You were an expert. Then at least one of us would know where to start.

JANE: It's reassuring to know that I'm not one of many.

LEON: That you're special?

JANE: Yes.

LEON: You are.

JANE: Thank you.

* * *

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SECTION B – continued

Plays

10. Andrew Bovell, *Speaking in Tongues*

2.

SARAH: He says that I wrote to him while I was in Europe. Well, I don't remember that. There could have been letters sent and things said. I was away. I was feeling lonely, so I could have written to him. But I don't remember making any promises.

NEIL: Why did you write those letters, Sarah?

SARAH: I don't know...

NEIL: When I re-read them they reminded me of something I had forgotten.

SARAH: I think I hurt this guy.

NEIL: Your letters reminded me of what it felt like to be loved.

And I guess, Sarah, I've held onto that.

SARAH: But I can't believe he didn't move on. I mean we're big people now, we get hurt and we move on.

NEIL: Because I've never been loved like that since. Not in the way that you loved me.

SARAH: At least I do.

NEIL: And although it's been years since we were together, I still hold onto that.

SARAH: I mean, does this guy think I haven't been hurt?

NEIL: In every crowded room the first thing I do is search the faces looking for you. Every time I walk down the street or walk along the beach or sit in traffic on my way to work, I search the faces looking for you. And at night I rehearse the things I will say. And the conversation always reaches the same point where I say

SARAH: But I don't know anymore.

NEIL: Come back and you say

SARAH: I don't know what's right anymore.

NEIL: Yes.

SARAH: I don't know what to feel anymore.

NEIL: And I want to be free of it, Sarah.

SARAH: So I'm getting these letters from this guy

NEIL: I want to be free of that conversation

SARAH: Who's telling me about my life

NEIL: So I just want to know

SARAH: And his version is just so different from mine

SARAH/NEIL: And

NEIL: I just want to know

SARAH: Now, after all these years, he wants to know

NEIL/SARAH: Why.

SARAH: I mean I could write and tell him

NEIL/SARAH: Why.

SARAH: I could write and say I'm sorry, but I never loved you. That's just something you wanted to believe in. I was twenty-three years old. Your talk of love and marriage didn't mean anything to me. I mean, that's why I went to Europe. To get away from you. To end it. Didn't you understand that? Maybe I should have told him all that when I left, but really, do you think he would have believed me? Even if I could, even if I had the words, the understanding to know what was happening, do you think he would have believed me? Anyway, it takes courage to be cruel and I don't have that. You know, I think the problem with this guy is that he's lazy. He's just too lazy to move on. Either that or he just likes pain. I mean, what I want to know is, what I really want to know is, does he still have the right to love me? Don't I have a say in that?

* * *

3.

VALERIE: [*answering machine*] There's this woman I'm seeing, a client. I'm not handling her very well.

JOHN: This is it.

SARAH: I get the sense that you don't like me.

VALERIE: Is it important that I like you?

SARAH: I would have thought that if you were going to help me you would need to like me.

VALERIE: I don't agree. I think I can only help you if I remain as objective as possible. Whether I like you or not is quite separate to that.

SARAH: But I want you to like me.

VALERIE: [*answering machine*] From the moment she came into my office I thought I don't like you. I don't want you here and I don't care about the pain *you're* in.

VALERIE: The most important element of the relationship between therapist and client is trust. Not friendship. I don't think you know how to trust, Sarah. I think something or someone has damaged you and that you've lost the ability to trust.

VALERIE: [*answering machine*] What's happening to me, John?

What's happening to us. We don't talk anymore. When did that happen? I remember such deep conversations with you.

VALERIE: And now you've taken refuge in a relationship with a man who can't give himself entirely to you.

VALERIE: [*answering machine*] I'm scared, John... that I'm losing you.

VALERIE: Because he has another.

VALERIE: [*answering machine*] Have I lost you, John?

VALERIE: His wife.

LEON: Do you want to stop for a while?

JOHN: No.

VALERIE: [*answering machine*] Have you stopped loving me, John?

JOHN: [*quietly*] No.

VALERIE: [*answering machine*] Because I feel that something has been taken from me.

SARAH: The funny thing is, Valerie, I think about her all the time. I've become so curious to know her, to understand the hold she has over him. He wants to leave her even though I tell him that's not necessary, at least not on my account. But every time he summons the courage to leave, she engineers some crisis, which forces him to stay.

* * *

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SECTION B – continued
TURN OVER

Plays

11. Shelagh Delaney, *A Taste of Honey*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *A Taste of Honey*.

1.

JO: Drink, drink, drink, that's all you're fit for. You make me sick.

HELEN: Others may pray for their daily bread, I pray for . . .

JO: Is that the bedroom?

HELEN: It is. Your health, Jo.

JO: We're sharing a bed again, I see.

HELEN: Of course, you know I can't bear to be parted from you.

JO: What I wouldn't give for a room of my own! God! It's freezing! Isn't there any sort of fire anywhere, Helen?

HELEN: Yes, there's a gas-propelled thing somewhere.

JO: Where?

HELEN: Where? What were you given eyes for? Do you want me to carry you about? Don't stand there shivering; have some of this if you're so cold.

JO: You know I don't like it.

HELEN: Have you tried it?

JO: No.

HELEN: Then get it down you! [*She wanders around the room searching for fire.*] "Where!" she says. She can never see anything till she falls over it. Now, where's it got to? I know I saw it here somewhere . . . one of those shilling in the slot affairs; the landlady pointed it out to me as part of the furniture and fittings. I don't know. Oh! It'll turn up. What's up with you now?

JO: I don't like the smell of it.

HELEN: You don't smell it, you drink it! It consoles you.

JO: What do you need consoling about?

HELEN: Life! Come on, give it to me if you've done with it. I'll soon put it in a safe place. [*Drinks.*]

JO: You're knocking it back worse than ever.

HELEN: Oh! Well, it's one way of passing time while I'm waiting for something to turn up. And it usually does if I drink hard enough. Oh my God! I've caught a shocking cold from somebody. Have you got a clean hanky, Jo? Mine's wringing wet with dabbing at my nose all day.

JO: Have this, it's nearly clean. Isn't that light awful? I do hate to see an unshaded electric light bulb dangling from the ceiling like that.

HELEN: Well, don't look at it then.

JO: Can I have that chair, Helen? I'll put my scarf round it.

[*JO takes chair from HELEN, stands on it and wraps her scarf round light bulb – burning herself in the process.*]

HELEN: Wouldn't she get on your nerves? Just when I was going to take the weight off my feet for five minutes. Oh! my poor old nose.

JO: Christ! It's hot.

HELEN: Why can't you leave things alone?

* * *

2.

JO: How old was I when your husband threw you out?

HELEN: Change the subject. When I think of her father and my husband it makes me wonder why I ever bothered, it does really.

JO: He was rich, wasn't he . . .

HELEN: He was a rat!

JO: He was your husband. Why did you marry him?

HELEN: At the time I had nothing better to do. Then he divorced me; that was your fault.

JO: I agree with him. If I was a man and my wife had a baby that wasn't mine I'd sling her out.

HELEN: Would you? It's a funny thing but I don't think I would. Still, why worry?

JO [*reading from magazine*]: It says here that Sheik Ahmed – an Arabian mystic – will, free of all charge, draw up for you a complete analysis of your character and destiny.

HELEN: Let's have a look.

JO: There's his photograph.

HELEN: Oh! He looks like a dirty little spiv. Listen Jo, don't bother your head about Arabian mystics. There's two w's in your future. Work or want, and no Arabian Knight can tell you different. We're all at the steering wheel of our own destiny. Careering along like drunken drivers. I'm going to get married. [*The news is received in silence.*] I said, I'm going to get married.

JO: Yes, I heard you the first time. What do you want me to do, laugh and throw pennies? Is it that Peter Smith?

HELEN: He's the unlucky man.

JO: You're centuries older than him.

HELEN: Only ten years.

JO: What use can a woman of that age be to anybody?

HELEN: I wish you wouldn't talk about me as if I'm an impotent, shrivelled old woman without a clue left in her head.

JO: You're not exactly a child bride.

HELEN: I have been one once, or near enough.

JO: Just imagine it, you're forty years old. I hope to be dead and buried before I reach that age. You've been living for forty years.

HELEN: Yes, it must be a biological phenomena.

JO: You don't look forty. You look a sort of well-preserved sixty.

[*Music. Enter PETER carrying a large bouquet and a box of chocolates and looking uncomfortable.*]

HELEN: Oh look, and it's all mine!

JO: Hello, Daddy.

PETER: Oh! So you told her.

HELEN: Of course. Come in and sit down. On second thoughts lie down, you look marvellous.

* * *

Plays

11. Shelagh Delaney, *A Taste of Honey*

3.

HELEN: It's all right, love, I'm here and everything's all right.
Are you awake now?

JO: Hello. Yes . . . What's it like?

HELEN: What?

JO: Is there much pain?

HELEN: No! It's not so much pain as hard work, love. I was putting my Christmas pudding up on a shelf when you started on me. There I was standing on a chair singing away merry as the day is long . . .

JO: Did you yell?

HELEN: No, I ran.

JO: Do you know, I had such a funny dream just now.

HELEN: Oh Jo, you're always dreaming, aren't you. Well, don't let's talk about your dreams or we'll get morbid.

JO: Where would you like those flowers putting?

HELEN: Over . . . over there . . . Come on, you come and do it, love.

JO: Hasn't Geof come back yet?

HELEN: No, he hasn't.

JO: Well, where are you going to sleep, Helen?

HELEN: It's all right, love. Don't fall over, now.

JO: You know, I've got so used to old Geof lying there on that couch like—like an old watchdog. You aren't . . .

HELEN: It's all right, love, don't you worry about me, I'll find somewhere.

JO: I wonder where he is . . . Oh!

HELEN: Oh Jo, careful . . . Hold on, love, hold on! It'll be all right. The first one doesn't last long. Oh my God, I could do with a drink now. Hold on.

[JO kneels on bed, HELEN strokes her hair.]

JO: That's better.

HELEN: Are you all right now? There we are. [*Children sing outside.*] Can you hear those children singing over there on the croft, Jo?

JO: Yes, you can always hear them on still days.

HELEN: You know when I was young we used to play all day long at this time of the year; in the summer we had singing games and in the spring we played with tops and hoops, and then in the autumn there was the Fifth of November, then we used to have bonfires in the street, and gingerbread and all that. Have I ever told you about the time when we went to a place called Shining Clough? Oh, I must have done. I used to climb up there every day and sit on the top of the hill, and you could see the mills in the distance, but the clough itself was covered in moss. Isn't it funny how you remember these things? Do you know, I'd sit there all day long and nobody ever knew where I was. Shall I go and make us a cup of tea?

[HELEN enters kitchen and fiddles with stove.]

Oh Jo, I've forgotten how we used to light this thing.

JO: Turn on all the knobs. Mind you don't gas yourself.

HELEN: I still can't do it.

JO: Geof'll fix it.

HELEN: No, it's all right.

JO: Helen.

HELEN: Yes.

JO: My baby may be black.

HELEN: You what, love?

JO: My baby will be black.

HELEN: Oh, don't be silly, Jo. You'll be giving yourself nightmares.

JO: But it's true. He was black.

HELEN: Who?

JO: Jimmie.

HELEN: You mean to say that . . . that sailor was a black man?

. . . Oh my God! Nothing else can happen to me now. Can you see me wheeling a pram with a . . . Oh my God. I'll have to have a drink.

* * *

Plays

12. Euripides, *Hippolytus*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Hippolytus*.

1.

PHAEDRA

Hear me, you women of Troezen who live
in this extremity of land, this anteroom to Argos.
Many a time in night's long empty spaces
I have pondered on the causes of a life's shipwreck.
I think that our lives are worse than the mind's quality
would warrant. There are many who know good sense.
But look. We know the good, we see it clear.
But we can't bring it to achievement. Some
are betrayed by their own laziness, and others
value some other pleasure above virtue.
There are so many pleasures in this life—
long gossiping talks and leisure, that sweet curse.
Then there is shame that thwarts us. Shame is of two kinds.
The one is harmless, but the other's a plague.
For clarity's sake, we should not talk of "shame,"
a single word for two quite different things.
These then are my views. Nothing can now seduce me
to the opposite opinion. I will tell you
in my own case the track which my mind followed.

At first when love had struck me, I reflected
how best to bear it. Silence was my first plan:
to conceal that illness. For I knew the tongue
is not to be trusted: it can criticize
another's faulty thoughts, but on its owner
it brings a thousand troubles.

Next, I believed that I could conquer love,
conquer it with discretion and good sense.
And when that too failed me, I resolved to die.
And death is the best plan. No one will dispute that.
I want to have my virtues known and honored—
not many witnesses when I do something wrong!
I know what is involved: I know the scandal;
and all too well I know that I am a woman,
object of hate to all.

* * *

2.

HIPPOLYTUS

[...] So you, vile woman,
came here to me to bargain and to traffic
in the sanctity of my father's marriage bed.
I'll go to a running stream and pour its waters
into my ear to purge away the filth.
Shall I who cannot even hear such impurity,
and feel myself untouched—shall I turn wicked?
Woman, know this. It is my piety saves you.
Had you not caught me off guard and bound
my lips with an oath, by heaven I would not refrain
from telling this to my father.
Now I will go and leave this house until
Theseus returns from his foreign wanderings,
and I'll be silent. But I'll watch you close.
I'll walk with my father step by step and see
how you look at him . . . you and your mistress both.
I have tasted of the daring of your infamy.
I'll know it for the future. Curses on you!
I'll hate you women, hate and hate and hate you,
and never have enough of hating . . .

Some

say that I talk of this eternally,
yes, but eternal, too, is woman's wickedness.
Either let someone teach them to be temperate,
or allow me to trample on them forever.

(Exit Hippolytus to the side.)

PHAEDRA [*singing*]

ANTISTROPHE

*Bitter indeed is woman's destiny!
I have failed. What trick is there now, what cunning plea
to loose the knot around my neck?
I have had justice. Oh, earth and the sunlight!
Where shall I escape from my fate?
How shall I hide my trouble, dear friends?
What God or man would appear
to bear hand or part in my crime?
There is a limit to all suffering and I have reached it.
I am the unhappiest of women.*

* * *

Plays

12. Euripides, *Hippolytus*

3.

THESEUS

*I shall no longer hold this secret prisoner
in the gates of my mouth. It is horrible,
yet I will speak.*

Citizens!

Hippolytus has dared to rape my wife.
He has dishonored Zeus's holy sunlight.
Father Poseidon, once you gave to me
three curses. . . . Now with one of these, I pray,
kill my son. Suffer him not to escape
this very day, if you have promised truly.

CHORUS LEADER

Call back your curses, King, call back your curses.
Else you will realize that you were wrong
another day, too late. I pray you, trust me.

THESEUS

I will not. And I now make this addition:
I banish him from this land's boundaries.
So fate shall strike him, one way or the other,
either Poseidon will respect my curse,
and send him dead into the house of Hades,
or exiled from this land, a beggar wandering,
on foreign soil, his life shall suck the dregs
of sorrow's cup.

CHORUS LEADER

Here comes your son, at the right moment, King Theseus.
Give over your deadly anger, you will best
determine for the welfare of your house.

(Enter Hippolytus with cosmpanions from the side.)

HIPPOLYTUS

I heard you crying, father, and came quickly.
I know no cause why you should mourn.
Tell me.

* * *

Plays

13. Toni Morrison, *Desdemona*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Desdemona*.

1.

DESDEMONA [...] I exist in between, now: between being killed

[...]

woman with weakness?

Toni Morrison, *Desdemona*,
Oberon Modern Plays, 2012

pp. 14–16

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2.

DESDEMONA Barbary! Barbary. Come closer [...]

SA'RAN [...] *Sing willow, willow, willow* –

Toni Morrison, *Desdemona*,
Oberon Modern Plays, 2012

pp. 45–47

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

Plays

13. Toni Morrison, *Desdemona*

3.

DESDEMONA Your cloak is tattered.

[...]

OTHELLO [...] with it; turned it into – into spectacle.

Toni Morrison, *Desdemona*,
Oberon Modern Plays, 2012

pp. 50 and 51

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Plays

14. Yasmina Reza, *Art*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Art*.

1.

Marc It's strange how you're missing the basic [...]

Yvan He'll laugh, you just wait.

Yasmina Reza, *Art*, Christopher Hampton (trans.),
Faber and Faber, 1996

pp. 9–11

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

2.

Marc Were you moved by Serge's painting?
[...]

Marc [...] From now on, I'm on my best behaviour.

Yasmina Reza, *Art*, Christopher Hampton (trans.),
Faber and Faber, 1996

pp. 19 and 20

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

Plays

14. Yasmina Reza, *Art*

3.

[Yvan] [...] I made you laugh, oh, yes [...]

(to Marc) Go on.

Silence.

Yasmina Reza, *Art*, Christopher Hampton (trans.),
Faber and Faber, 1996

pp. 58–60

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

Plays

15. William Shakespeare, *Othello*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Othello*.

1.		2.	
BRABANTIO	[...] She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks; For nature so preposterously to err, Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense, Sans witchcraft could not.	IAGO	For Michael Cassio, I dare be sworn I think that he is honest.
DUKE	Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself, And you of her, the bloody book of law You shall yourself read in the bitter letter After your own sense, yea, though our proper son Stood in your action.	OTHELLO	I think so too.
BRABANTIO	Humbly I thank your grace. Here is the man: this Moor, whom now it seems Your special mandate for the state affairs Hath hither brought.	IAGO	Men should be what they seem; Or those that be not, would they might seem none!
ALL	We are very sorry for't.	OTHELLO	Certain, men should be what they seem.
DUKE	[To <i>Othello</i>] What in your own part can you say to this?	IAGO	Why then, I think Cassio's an honest man.
BRABANTIO	Nothing, but this is so.	OTHELLO	Nay, yet there's more in this.
OTHELLO	Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors, My very noble and approved good masters, That I have tane away this old man's daughter, It is most true; true I have married her; The very head and front of my offending Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace, For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used Their dearest action in the tented field; And little of this great world can I speak More than pertains to feats of broil and battle; And therefore little shall I grace my cause In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience, I will a round unvarnished tale deliver Of my whole course of love: what drugs, what charms, What conjuration and what mighty magic – For such proceedings I am charged withal – I won his daughter.	OTHELLO	I prithee speak to me as to thy thinkings, As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of thoughts The worst of words.
BRABANTIO	A maiden never bold; Of spirit so still and quiet that her motion Blushed at herself; and she, in spite of nature, Of years, of country, credit, everything, To fall in love with what she feared to look on? It is a judgement maimed and most imperfect That will confess perfection so could err Against all rules of nature, and must be driven To find out practices of cunning hell Why this should be. I therefore vouch again That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood Or with some dram conjured to this effect He wrought upon her.	IAGO	Good my lord, pardon me; Though I am bound to every act of duty, I am not bound to that all slaves are free to. Utter my thoughts! Why, say they are vile and false? As where's that palace, whereinto foul things Sometimes intrude not? Who has a breast so pure, But some uncleanly apprehensions Keep leets and law-days, and in session sit With meditations lawful?
		OTHELLO	Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago, If thou but think'st him wronged, and mak'st his ear A stranger to thy thoughts.
		IAGO	I do beseech you, Though I perchance am vicious in my guess – As I confess it is my nature's plague To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy Shapes faults that are not – that your wisdom then, From one that so imperfectly conceits, Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble Out of his scattering and unsure observance. It were not for your quiet, nor your good, Nor for my manhood, honesty, and wisdom, To let you know my thoughts.
		OTHELLO	What dost thou mean?
		IAGO	Good name in man and woman, dear my lord, Is the immediate jewel of their souls. Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something, nothing, 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands: But he that filches from me my good name Robs me of that which not enriches him And makes me poor indeed.
		OTHELLO	By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.
		IAGO	You cannot, if my heart were in your hand, Nor shall not, while 'tis in my custody.
		OTHELLO	Ha!

* * *

SECTION B – continued

Plays

15. William Shakespeare, *Othello*

IAGO O beware, my lord, of jealousy:
 It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
 The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss
 Who certain of his fate loves not his wronger;
 But O, what damnèd minutes tells he o'er
 Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet fondly
 loves?

OTHELLO O misery!

* * *

3.

*Enter OTHELLO, with a light, and DESDEMONA
 in bed.*

OTHELLO It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul:
 Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars.
 It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
 Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
 And smooth as monumental alabaster –
 Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
 Put out the light, and then put out the light:
 If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
 I can again thy former light restore,
 Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
 Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
 I know not where is that Promethean heat
 That can thy light relume. When I have plucked
 thy rose,
 I cannot give it vital growth again;
 It needs must wither. I'll smell it on the tree.

He kisses her.

O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
 Justice to break her sword! One more, one more!
 Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee
 And love thee after. One more, and this the last.
 So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep.
 But they are cruel tears: this sorrow's heavenly –
 It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

* * *

Plays

16. William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Twelfth Night*.

1.

OLIVIA Your lord does know my mind. I cannot love him.
Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,
Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;
In voices well divulged, free, learned, and valiant,
And in dimension, and the shape of nature,
A gracious person. But yet I cannot love him.
He might have took his answer long ago.

VIOLA If I did love you in my master's flame,
With such a suff'ring, such a deadly life,
In your denial I would find no sense;
I would not understand it.

OLIVIA Why, what would you?

VIOLA Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
And call upon my soul within the house;
Write loyal cantons of contemn'd love,
And sing them loud even in the dead of night;
Hallow your name to the reverberate hills,
And make the babbling gossip of the air
Cry out 'Olivia!' O you should not rest
Between the elements of air and earth
But you should pity me!

OLIVIA You might do much.

VIOLA What is your parentage?

VIOLA Above my fortunes, yet my state is well:
I am a gentleman.

OLIVIA Get you to your lord.

OLIVIA I cannot love him. Let him send no more –
Unless (perchance) you come to me again,
To tell me how he takes it. Fare you well.
I thank you for your pains. Spend this for me.

VIOLA I am no fee'd post, lady; keep your purse;
My master, not myself, lacks recompense.
Love make his heart of flint that you shall love,
And let your fervour like my master's be
Placed in contempt. Farewell, fair cruelty. *Exit*

OLIVIA 'What is your parentage?'
'Above my fortunes, yet my state is well:
I am a gentleman.' I'll be sworn thou art;
Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions, and spirit
Do give thee five-fold blazon. Not too fast! Soft,
soft!
Unless the master were the man – How now?
Even so quickly may one catch the plague?
Methinks I feel this youth's perfections
With an invisible and subtle stealth
To creep in at mine eyes. Well, let it be.

* * *

2.

OLIVIA Wilt thou go to bed, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO To bed? Ay, sweetheart, and I'll come to thee.

OLIVIA God comfort thee! Why dost thou smile so and kiss
thy hand so oft?

MARIA How do you, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO At your request!
Yes, nightingales answer daws!

MARIA Why appear you with this ridiculous boldness before
my lady?

MALVOLIO 'Be not afraid of greatness': 'twas well writ.

OLIVIA What mean'st thou by that, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO 'Some are born great –'

OLIVIA Ha?

MALVOLIO 'Some achieve greatness –'

OLIVIA What say'st thou?

MALVOLIO 'And some have greatness thrust upon them.'

OLIVIA Heaven restore thee!

MALVOLIO 'Remember who commended thy yellow
stockings –'

OLIVIA Thy yellow stockings?

MALVOLIO 'And wished to see thee cross-gartered.'

OLIVIA Cross-gartered?

MALVOLIO 'Go to, thou art made, if thou desir'st to be so –'

OLIVIA Am I made?

MALVOLIO 'If not, let me see thee a servant still.'

OLIVIA Why, this is very midsummer madness.

Enter SERVANT

SERVANT Madam, the young gentleman of the Count Orsino's
is returned; I could hardly entreat him back. He
attends your ladyship's pleasure.

OLIVIA I'll come to him.

[Exit Servant]

Good Maria, let this fellow be looked to. Where's
my cousin Toby? Let some of my people have a
special care of him; I would not have him miscarry
for the half of my dowry.

[Exeunt Olivia and Maria]

MALVOLIO O ho, do you come near me now? No worse man
than Sir Toby to look to me! This concurs directly
with the letter: she sends him on purpose that I may
appear stubborn to him; for she incites me to that in
the letter. 'Cast thy humble slough', says she; 'be
opposite with a kinsman, surly with servants, let thy
tongue tang with arguments of state, put thyself into
the trick of singularity', and consequently sets down
the manner how: as a sad face, a reverend carriage,
a slow tongue, in the habit of some sir of note, and
so forth. I have limed her, but it is Jove's doing, and
Jove make me thankful! And when she went away
now, 'Let this fellow be looked to' – 'Fellow'! Not
'Malvolio', nor after my degree, but 'fellow'.

* * *

SECTION B – continued

Plays

16. William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*

3.

Enter OLIVIA and Attendants

ORSINO Here comes the countess; now heaven walks on earth.

But for thee, fellow – Fellow, thy words are madness.

Three months this youth hath tended upon me,
But more of that anon. Take him aside.

OLIVIA What would my lord, but that he may not have,
Wherein Olivia may seem serviceable?

Cesario, you do not keep promise with me.

VIOLA Madam!

ORSINO Gracious Olivia –

OLIVIA What do you say, Cesario? Good my lord –

VIOLA My lord would speak; my duty hushes me.

OLIVIA If it be aught to the old tune, my lord,

It is as fat and fulsome to mine ear

As howling after music.

ORSINO Still so cruel?

OLIVIA Still so constant, lord.

ORSINO What, to perverseness? You uncivil lady,
To whose ingrate and unauspicious altars
My soul the faithfull'st off'rings have breathed out
That e'er devotion tendered! What shall I do?

OLIVIA Even what it please my lord that shall become him.

ORSINO Why should I not – had I the heart to do it –

Like to th'Egyptian thief at point of death

Kill what I love – a savage jealousy

That sometimes savours nobly? But hear me this.

Since you to non-regardance cast my faith,

And that I partly know the instrument

That screws me from my true place in your favour,
Live you the marble-breasted tyrant still.

But this your minion, whom I know you love,

And whom, by heaven I swear, I tender dearly,

Him will I tear out of that cruel eye

Where he sits crownèd in his master's spite.

Come, boy, with me; my thoughts are ripe in mischief.

I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love,

To spite a raven's heart within a dove. [*Leaving*]

VIOLA And I most jocund, apt, and willingly,
To do you rest, a thousand deaths would die.

[*Following*]

OLIVIA Where goes Cesario?

VIOLA After him I love

More than I love these eyes, more than my life,

More, by all mores, than e'er I shall love wife.

If I do feign, you witnesses above

Punish my life for tainting of my love!

OLIVIA Ay me, detested! How am I beguiled!

VIOLA Who does beguile you? Who does do you wrong?

OLIVIA Hast thou forgot thyself? Is it so long?

Call forth the holy father.

* * *

Plays

17. Sam Shepard, *Buried Child*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Buried Child*.

1.

HALIE: You're going to get kicked out of this house, Tilden, if you don't tell me where you got that corn! (TILDEN *starts crying softly to himself but keeps husking corn. Pause.*)

DODGE: (To HALIE.) Why'd you have to tell him that? Who cares where he got the corn? Why'd you have to go and threaten him with expulsion?

HALIE: (To DODGE.) It's your fault, you know! You're the one that's behind all of this! I suppose you thought it'd be funny! Some joke! Cover the house with corn husks. You better get this cleaned up before Bradley sees it.

DODGE: Bradley's not getting in the front door!

HALIE: (*Kicking husks, striding back and forth.*) Bradley's going to be very upset when he sees this. He doesn't like to see the house in disarray. He can't stand it when one thing is out of place. The slightest thing. You know how he gets.

DODGE: Bradley doesn't even live here!

HALIE: It's his home as much as ours. He was born in this house!

DODGE: He was born in a hog wallow.

HALIE: Don't you say that! Don't you ever say that!

DODGE: He was born in a goddamn hog wallow! That's where he was born and that's where he belongs! He doesn't belong in this house! (HALIE *stops.*)

HALIE: I don't know what's come over you, Dodge. I don't know what in the world's come over you. You've become an evil, spiteful, vengeful man. You used to be a good man.

DODGE: Six of one, a half dozen of another.

HALIE: You sit here day and night, festering away! Decomposing! Smelling up the house with your putrid body! Hacking your head off 'til all hours of the morning! Thinking up mean, evil, stupid things to say about your own flesh and blood!

DODGE: He's not my flesh and blood! My flesh and blood's out there in the backyard! (*They freeze. Long pause. The men stare at her.*)

HALIE: (*Quietly.*) That's enough, Dodge. That's quite enough. You've become confused. I'm going out now. I'm going to have lunch with Father Dewis. I'm going to ask him about a monument for Ansel. A statue. At least a plaque.

* * *

2.

DODGE: [...] (To SHELLY.) What part of the country do you hail from, girlie?

SHELLY: Originally?

DODGE: That's right. Originally. At the very start.

SHELLY: LA.

DODGE: LA. Stupid country.

SHELLY: I can't stand this, Vince! This is really unbelievable!

DODGE: It's stupid! LA is stupid! So is Florida. All those Sunshine States. They're all stupid! Do you know why they're stupid?

SHELLY: Illuminate me.

VINCE: Shelly. Don't!

DODGE: I'll tell you why. Because they're full of smart-asses! That's why. (SHELLY *turns her back to DODGE, crosses to staircase and sits on bottom step. To VINCE.*) Now she's insulted.

SHELLY: Vince?

DODGE: She's insulted! Look at her! In my house she's insulted! She's over there sulking because I insulted her!

VINCE: Grandpa—

SHELLY: (To VINCE.) This is really terrific. This is wonderful. And you were worried about me making the right first impression!

DODGE: (To VINCE.) She's a fireball, isn't she? Regular fireball. I had some a them in my day. Temporary stuff. Never lasted more than a week.

VINCE: Grandpa—look—

DODGE: Stop calling me Grandpa, will ya! It's sickening. "Grandpa." I'm nobody's grandpa! Least of all yours.

VINCE: I can't believe you don't recognize me. I just can't believe it. It wasn't that long ago. (DODGE *starts feeling around under the cushion for the bottle of whiskey. SHELLY gets up from the staircase.*)

SHELLY: (To VINCE.) Maybe you've got the wrong house. Did you ever think of that? Maybe this is the wrong address!

VINCE: It's not the wrong address! I recognize the yard. The porch. The elm tree. The house. I was standing right here in this house. Right in this very spot.

Plays

17. Sam Shepard, *Buried Child*

3.

SHELLY: Yeah, but do you recognize the people? He says he's not your grandfather.

VINCE: He *is* my grandpa! I know he's my grandpa! He's *always* been my grandpa. He always *will be* my grandpa!

DODGE: (*Digging for the bottle.*) Where's that bottle?!

VINCE: He's just sick or something. I don't know what's happened to him. Delirious.

DODGE: Where's my goddamn bottle?! (*DODGE gets up from the sofa and starts tearing the cushions off it and throwing them downstage, looking for the whiskey.*) They've stole my bottle!

SHELLY: Can't we just drive on to New Mexico? This is terrible, Vince! I don't want to stay here. In this house. I thought it was going to be turkey dinners and apple pie and all that kinda stuff.

VINCE: Well, I hate to disappoint you!

* * *

DODGE: (*To VINCE.*) Go ahead! Take over the house! Take over the whole goddamn house! You can have it! It's yours! It's been a pain in the neck ever since the very first mortgage. I'm gonna die any second now. Any second. You won't even notice. So I'll settle my affairs once and for all. (*As DODGE proclaims his last will and testament, VINCE climbs into the room, knife in his mouth, and strides slowly around the space, inspecting his inheritance. He casually notices BRADLEY as he crawls toward his leg. VINCE moves to the leg and keeps pushing it with his foot so that it's out of BRADLEY's reach, then goes on with his inspection. He picks up the roses and carries them around smelling them. SHELLY can be seen outside on the porch, moving slowly center and staring in at VINCE. VINCE ignores her.*) The house goes to my grandson, Vincent. That's fair and square. All the furnishings, accoutrements, and paraphernalia therein. Everything tacked to the walls or otherwise resting under this roof. My tools—namely my band saw, my skill saw, my drill press, my chain saw, my lathe, my electric sander—all go to my eldest son, Tilden. That is, if he ever shows up again. My Benny Goodman records, my harnesses, my bits, my halters, my brace, my rough rasp, my forge, my welding equipment, my shoeing nails, my levels and bevels, my milking stool—no, not my milking stool—my hammers and chisels and all related materials are to be pushed into a gigantic heap and set ablaze in the very center of my fields. When the blaze is at its highest, preferably on a cold, windless night, my body is to be pitched into the middle of it and burned 'til nothing remains but ash. (*Pause. VINCE takes the knife out of his mouth and smells the roses. He's facing toward the audience and doesn't turn around to SHELLY. He folds up the knife and pockets it.*)

SHELLY: (*From the porch.*) I'm leaving, Vince. Whether you come or not, I'm leaving. I can't stay here.

VINCE: (*Smelling the roses.*) You'll never make it. You'll see.

SHELLY: (*Moving toward the hole in the screen.*) You're not coming? (*VINCE stays downstage, turns and looks at her.*)

VINCE: I just inherited a house. I've finally been recognized. Didn't you hear?

SHELLY: (*Through the hole, from the porch.*) You want to stay here?

VINCE: (*As he pushes BRADLEY's leg out of reach.*) I've gotta carry on the line. It's in the blood. I've gotta see to it that things keep rolling. (*BRADLEY looks up at him from the floor, keeps pulling himself toward his leg. VINCE keeps moving it.*)

SHELLY: What happened to you, Vince? You just disappeared.

* * *

Plays

18. Tennessee Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

1.

BIG MAMA: Don't laugh about it! [...]

[She stands before the long oval mirror, touches her breast and then her hips with her two hands.]

Tennessee Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*,
Penguin Modern Classics, 2009

pp. 20 and 21

2.

BRICK: I never lied to you, Big Daddy.

[...]

Skipper died to disavow between them.[...]

Tennessee Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*,
Penguin Modern Classics, 2009

pp. 59–61

Plays

18. Tennessee Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

3.

MAE: Oh, Mommy, Mommy, Big Mommy! [...]

GOOPER: [...] I'm just appealing to a sense of common decency
and fair play.Tennessee Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*,
Penguin Modern Classics, 2009

pp. 82 and 83

Short stories

19. Maxine Beneba Clarke, *Foreign Soil*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Foreign Soil*.

1.

David

Hours, hours must be passing [...] were racing my David, for the fun.

Maxine Beneba Clarke, *Foreign Soil*,
Hachette, 2014

pp. 11–14

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

Short stories

19. Maxine Beneba Clarke, *Foreign Soil*

2.

Big Island

Im brother Curtis was all dress up [...] it always gwan stand fe *home*.

Maxine Beneba Clarke, *Foreign Soil*,
Hachette, 2014

pp. 183–185

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3.

The Sukiyaki Book Club

Markie’s deep in the tune now [...] then runs off towards her classroom.

Maxine Beneba Clarke, *Foreign Soil*,
Hachette, 2014

pp. 264 and 265

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Short stories

20. Ceridwen Dovey, *Only the Animals*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Only the Animals*.

1.

Somewhere Along the Line the Pearl Would be Handed to Me

Soul of Mussel

Then the smell of festy spring [...] solved most everything.

Ceridwen Dovey, *Only the Animals*,
Hamish Hamilton Penguin (Australia), 2014

pp. 101 and 102

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2.

Plautus: A Memoir of My Years on Earth and Last Days in Space

Soul of Tortoise

Which part of the trip was the hardest [...]

UGOLYOK: [...] They will come at you worse than ever before.

Ceridwen Dovey, *Only the Animals*,
Hamish Hamilton Penguin (Australia), 2014

pp. 148 and 149

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Short stories

20. Ceridwen Dovey, *Only the Animals*

3.

Psittacophile***Soul of Parrot***

My owner was watching Marty [...] You should never take it lightly, life in the East.

Ceridwen Dovey, *Only the Animals*,
Hamish Hamilton Penguin (Australia), 2014

pp. 242 and 243

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Short stories

21. Nikolay Gogol, *The Diary of a Madman*, *The Government Inspector* and *Selected Stories*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *The Diary of a Madman*, *The Government Inspector* and *Selected Stories*.

1.

How Ivan Ivanovich Quarrelled with Nikiforovich

Sweeping changes took place: if a neighbour's dog strayed into the yard it was beaten with the first thing that came to hand; children who climbed over the fence came back howling, their shirts lifted up to show where they had been thrashed. Even the old peasant woman, when Ivan Ivanovich wanted to ask her something or other, gave such an obscene reply that Ivan Ivanovich, being an extremely sensitive person, spat on the ground and muttered: 'What a filthy woman! Worse than her master!'

Finally, to add insult to injury, his hateful neighbour had a goose shed built just where he used to climb over the fence, apparently with the specific intention of making the insult even worse. This shed that Ivan Ivanovich found perfectly hideous was built with devilish speed – in a single day.

All this filled Ivan Ivanovich with malice and a longing for vengeance. However, he did not show any signs of annoyance, despite the fact that the shed actually encroached on his land. But his heart began to beat so fast that he found it very difficult to keep up this outward show of calm. This was how he spent the rest of the day.

Night came. Oh, if only I were a painter I could portray to wonderful effect all the enchantment of night! I would paint the whole of Mirgorod as it slept; the countless motionless stars looking down upon it; the almost visible distance; the lovelorn sexton rushing past and climbing over the fence with the boldness of knights of old; the white walls of the houses caught by moonlight becoming even whiter, and the overhanging trees turning even darker and casting even deeper shadows; the flowers and silent grass smelling more fragrant; and the crickets, those restless cavaliers of the night, singing their friendly chirruping songs in unison in every corner.

I would paint the black-browed village maiden tossing about on her lonely bed in one of the tiny low-roofed clay cottages, her bosom heaving as she dreamt of some hussar's moustache and spurs. I would paint the black shadows of bats flitting along the white road and settling on chimney pots blanched in the moonlight. But to paint Ivan Ivanovich as he went out that night, saw in hand, is beyond my powers. His face registered a hundred different expressions. Quietly, quietly, he crept up and crawled under the goose shed. Ivan Nikiforovich's dogs had not yet heard about the quarrel so they treated him as an old friend and let him go up to the shed which was supported by four oak posts. He crawled over to the nearest one and started sawing. The noise produced by the saw made him constantly look round, but the thought of the insult restored his courage.

The first post was sawn through; he started on another. His eyes seemed to be on fire and he was blinded with terror. Suddenly Ivan Ivanovich cried out loud and went numb all over: he thought he had seen a ghost. But he quickly recovered when he realized it was a goose sticking its neck out at him. He spat with annoyance and carried on with his work.

* * *

2.

Nevsky Prospekt

Nowhere do people bow so nobly and naturally as on Nevsky Prospekt. Here you will see a unique smile that is the very pinnacle of art, that will sometimes make you melt with pleasure, sometimes make you bow your head and feel lower than grass, or hold it high, making you feel loftier than the Admiralty spire. Here you will hear people discussing a concert or the weather with extraordinary refinement and sense of their own importance. Here you will encounter a thousand incredible characters and events. Good heavens! What strange types you will meet on Nevsky Prospekt! Many are those who will not fail to look at your boots on meeting and when you have passed will look around to inspect your coat-tails. To this day I cannot understand why this should be. At first I thought they were bootmakers – but no, far from it. For the most part they are clerks in various departments; many of them can draft a memorandum from one department to the other with consummate skill. Or they are simple people who stroll along or read the paper in pastry shops: in other words, they are normally highly respectable citizens.

At this blessed hour, between two and three o'clock in the afternoon, when everything on Nevsky Prospekt reaches its climax, the finest products of man's genius are most grandly displayed. Someone will sport a dandyish frock-coat with the best beaver collar, another – a handsome Greek nose, a third – superb whiskers, a fourth – a pair of pretty eyes and a wonderful hat, a fifth – a signet ring with seal, ostentatiously worn on the little finger, a sixth – a dainty foot in an enchanting shoe, a seventh – a stunning tie, an eighth – simply astounding moustaches. But on the stroke of three the exhibition is over, the crowd begins to thin out. At three o'clock there is a fresh transformation: spring has suddenly come to Nevsky Prospekt!

* * *

Short stories

21. Nikolay Gogol, *The Diary of a Madman, The Government Inspector and Selected Stories*

3.

The Carriage

The small courtyard at the general's quarters was packed with droshkies and other carriages. The company was male, consisting of officers and sundry local landowners. Most eminent among the latter was one Pifagor Pifagorovich Chertokutsky, one of the foremost aristocrats in B— province, who made his voice heard above all others at the elections, turning up in a very fancy carriage. Once he had served in a cavalry regiment and had been one of its most notable and prominent officers. At least, he was seen at numerous balls and gatherings wherever his regiment happened to be stationed: the young ladies of Tambov and Simbirsk provinces can vouch for that. He might equally have acquired fame in other provinces had he not been obliged to resign his commission as a result of one of those incidents commonly called 'an unpleasant business'. Whether he had slapped someone's face in the old days, or whether someone had slapped him, I cannot say for certain. Whatever the facts, he had to resign. However, his authority was not diminished one bit. He gallivanted around in a military-style, high-waisted tail-coat, wore spurs on his boots and sported a moustache under his nose, for without one the local gentry might think that he had served in the infantry, which he sometimes contemptuously referred to as 'infantry' and sometimes as 'infantry'. He visited all the crowded fairs, where the very heart of Russia, consisting of mammas, daughters and fat squires, would flock to amuse themselves, in their brichkas, tarantasses and such preposterous carriages as you would never even see in your dreams. He had a pronounced talent for sniffing out a cavalry regiment's quarters, leaping with the utmost aplomb from his light carriage or droshky, and in no time at all he would make the officers' acquaintance. At the last election he had given a splendid dinner for the gentry, at which he announced that if only he were elected marshal he would not fail to 'set them up'. By and large, he lorded it like a real gentleman, as they say in the provinces, married a pretty girl with a dowry of two hundred serfs and several thousand in cash. These funds were immediately lavished on a team of six truly excellent horses, gilt locks for the doors, a tame monkey for the house and a French butler. The young lady's two hundred serfs, together with two hundred of his own, were mortgaged for some business transaction. In brief, he was an exemplary landowner, a real paragon. Apart from him, there were several other landowners at the general's dinner, but there is nothing much to say about them. The remaining guests were officers from the same regiment, and two staff officers: a colonel and a rather corpulent major. The general himself was rather stout and stocky, but, in the words of his officers, a good commander. He spoke in a rather thick, portentous bass.

* * *

Other literature

22. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *My Father's Daughter: Memories of an Australian Childhood*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *My Father's Daughter: Memories of an Australian Childhood*.

1.

My sense of myself and my place in the world [...] namely attractiveness or sex appeal

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *My Father's Daughter: Memories of an Australian Childhood*,
Melbourne University Press, 2010

pp. 67 and 68

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2.

My last two years at the university were different [...] a threat to beat him at his own game?

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *My Father's Daughter: Memories of an Australian Childhood*,
Melbourne University Press, 2010

pp. 148–150

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

Other literature

22. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *My Father's Daughter: Memories of an Australian Childhood*

3.

Re-reading the correspondence [...] As if I were my father, and it was my daughter who had died.

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *My Father's Daughter:
Memories of an Australian Childhood*,
Melbourne University Press, 2010

pp. 230 and 231

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

Other literature

23. Voltaire, *Candide, or Optimism*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *Candide, or Optimism*.

1.

How Candide was obliged to part from the lovely Cunégonde and from the old woman

Presently they reached port at Buenos Aires. Cunégonde, Captain Candide and the old woman went to call on the Governor, Don Fernando d'Ibaraa y Figueora y Mascarenes y Lampourdos y Souza. This grandee had the pride befitting a person who bore so many names. He spoke to everyone with the most aristocratic disdain, pointed his nose so loftily, projected his voice so raspingly, adopted so superior a tone and affected so haughty a gait that all who met him were sorely tempted to thrash him. He adored women to the point of mania. Cunégonde seemed to him the most beautiful he had ever seen. The first thing he did was to inquire whether she were not perhaps Captain Candide's wife? The manner with which he asked this question disturbed Candide, who dared not say yes, for she was not in fact his wife, and who neither dared to call her his sister, for she was not that either; and although this white lie was once very fashionable among the Ancients, and could still have its uses for the Moderns, his heart was too pure to betray the truth. 'Mademoiselle Cunégonde,' he said, 'has promised to do me the honour of marrying me, and we humbly beg Your Excellency to conduct the ceremony.'

Don Fernando d'Ibaraa y Figueora y Mascarenes y Lampourdos y Souza twirled his moustache, smiled sardonically, and ordered Captain Candide to go and review his company. Candide obeyed, and the Governor stayed behind in the company of Cunégonde. He declared his passion to her, and assured her that tomorrow he would marry her, with the Church's blessing or anyone else's, however it pleased her charming person. Cunégonde asked him for a quarter of an hour to collect herself, to consult the old woman, and come to a decision.

The old woman said to Cunégonde: 'Mademoiselle, you have seventy-two quarterings, and not a farthing to your name; it is in your power alone to become the wife of the most powerful nobleman in the Americas, who moreover has a very fine moustache; is this the moment for you to pride yourself on your unswerving fidelity? [...]'

* * *

2.

What happened to Candide and Martin at sea

So the old scholar, who was called Martin, embarked for Bordeaux with Candide. Both had seen and suffered much; and even had their ship been scheduled to sail from Surinam to Japan via the Cape of Good Hope, they could still have occupied the whole voyage discussing moral and physical evil.

Candide had one great advantage over Martin, however, for he still hoped to see Mademoiselle Cunégonde again, whereas Martin had nothing to hope for; moreover, Candide had some gold and diamonds; and although he had lost a hundred large red sheep laden with the greatest treasures on earth, and although the knavery of the Dutch captain gnawed at his heart, nevertheless, when he thought of what remained in his pockets, and when he spoke of Cunégonde, especially at the end of a good meal, he still inclined towards the system of Pangloss.

'But you, Monsieur Martin,' he said to the scholar, 'what do you make of all this? What is your idea of physical evil and moral evil?' – 'Sir,' replied Martin, 'the priests accused me of being a Socinian; but the truth of the matter is that I am a Manichean.' – 'Now you are making fun of me,' said Candide, 'there are surely no Manicheans left in the world.' – 'Well, here is one,' said Martin. 'I cannot help it, but I cannot see things in any other way.' – 'Then you must have the devil in you,' said Candide. – 'He takes so great a share in the affairs of this world,' said Martin, 'that he may well be a part of me, as of everything else; but I assure you, when I look around at this globe, or rather this globule, I think that God has indeed abandoned it all to some malign being – all except your Eldorado, of course. I have scarcely seen a town that did not desire the ruin of the next town, nor a family that did not wish to exterminate some other family. Everywhere the weak loathe the strong, before whom they cringe, and the strong treat them like so many sheep to be sold for their meat and their wool. A million assassins in regimental formation run from one end of Europe to the other, murdering and pillaging under orders, as a way of earning their bread, since there is no profession more honourable; and even in those cities which appear to enjoy peace, and where the arts flourish, men are more devoured by envy, cares and anxiety than all the tribulations visited upon a citadel under siege. Private griefs are crueller even than public miseries. In short, I have seen so much, and endured so much, that I am become a Manichean.'

'And yet there is some good in the world,' Candide would reply. – 'That may be so,' Martin would say, 'but I have not experienced it.'

In the midst of this discussion the sound of cannon was heard. The noise grew louder with each passing moment. Everyone reached for their spyglasses. Two vessels were to be seen engaging in combat at a distance of about three miles: the wind brought them both so close to the French vessel that everyone had the pleasure of watching the engagement in complete comfort. Presently one of the vessels fired a broadside, so low down and so accurate as to sink the other outright. Candide and Martin could distinctly make out a hundred or so men on the deck of the sinking vessel, all raising their arms to heaven and

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23. Voltaire, *Candide, or Optimism*

uttering the most fearful shrieks; the next moment everything was swallowed.

‘Well, there you have it,’ said Martin. ‘That is how men behave towards each other.’ – ‘Certainly,’ said Candide, ‘the devil had a hand in this business, at least.’ As he was speaking, he noticed something bright red in the water, swimming close to their ship. The launch was lowered to see what it might be. It was one of Candide’s sheep. He felt more joy at recovering this one sheep than the affliction he had suffered at losing a hundred, each laden with the fat diamonds of Eldorado.

The French captain soon ascertained that the captain of the ship doing the sinking was a Spaniard, and that the captain of the ship being sunk was a Dutch pirate: the very same who had robbed Candide. The immense riches seized by this scoundrel were engulfed along with him, and nothing saved but a single sheep. ‘You see,’ said Candide to Martin, ‘crime is sometimes punished; that blackguard of a Dutch owner got the fate he deserved.’ – ‘Yes,’ said Martin, ‘but did the passengers on board have to perish too? God punished the thief, the devil drowned the rest.’

* * *

3.

How Candide was reunited with Cunégonde and the old woman

While Candide, the Baron, Pangloss, Martin and Cacambo were describing their adventures, and disputing as to whether the events in this universe are contingent or non-contingent, and arguing about effects and causes, moral evil and physical evil, free will and necessity, not to mention the consolations to be found aboard a Turkish galley, they reached the shores of the Propontide, close by the house of the Prince of Transylvania. The first thing they saw was Cunégonde and the old woman, who were hanging towels out to dry on a line.

The Baron turned pale at the sight. Candide, the tender lover, on seeing his beautiful Cunégonde all weather-beaten, her eyes bloodshot, her breasts sunken, her cheeks lined, her arms red and chapped, was seized with horror; he recoiled three paces, then advanced out of sheer good manners. She embraced Candide and her brother; they embraced the old woman; Candide ransomed the pair of them.

There was a small holding in the neighborhood: the old woman suggested to Candide that he avail himself of it for the time being, until the fortunes of their whole company should improve. Cunégonde was unaware of how ugly she had become, no one having told her. She now reminded Candide of his promises, and in so peremptory a fashion that the good Candide dare not to refuse her. So he informed the Baron of his intention to marry his sister. ‘Never,’ said the Baron, ‘will I tolerate such baseness on her part, nor such insolence on yours. Never shall I be reproached with condoning this infamous union: my sister’s children would be unable to show their faces in the Chapters of Germany. No, my sister shall never marry unless she marry a baron of the Empire.’ Cunégonde threw herself at his feet and bathed them with her tears: he was inflexible. – ‘You absolute ass,’ said Candide. ‘I have rescued you from the galleys; I have paid for your freedom; I have paid for your sister’s freedom. She was washing dishes here; she is ugly; I have the goodness to make her my wife, and still you presume to oppose it! I would kill you all over again were I to give way to my anger!’ – ‘You may kill me all over again,’ said the Baron, ‘but you will never marry my sister while I am living.’

* * *

Other literature

24. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of *A Room of One's Own*.

1.

Have you any notion of how many books are written about women in the course of one year? Have you any notion how many are written by men? Are you aware that you are, perhaps, the most discussed animal in the universe? Here had I come with a notebook and a pencil proposing to spend a morning reading, supposing that at the end of the morning I should have transferred the truth to my notebook. But I should need to be a herd of elephants, I thought, and a wilderness of spiders, desperately referring to the animals that are reputed longest lived and most multitudinously eyed, to cope with all this. I should need claws of steel and beak of brass even to penetrate the husk. How shall I ever find the grains of truth embedded in all this mass of paper? I asked myself, and in despair began running my eye up and down the long list of titles. Even the names of the books gave me food for thought. Sex and its nature might well attract doctors and biologists; but what was surprising and difficult of explanation was the fact that sex – woman, that is to say – also attracts agreeable essayists, light-fingered novelists, young men who have taken the M.A. degree; men who have taken no degree; men who have no apparent qualification save that they are not women. Some of these books were, on the face of it, frivolous and facetious; but many, on the other hand, were serious and prophetic, moral and hortatory. Merely to read the titles suggested innumerable school-masters, innumerable clergymen mounting their platforms and pulpits and holding forth with loquacity which far exceeded the hour usually allotted to such discourse on this one subject. It was a most strange phenomenon; and apparently – here I consulted the letter M – one confined to the male sex. Women do not write books about men – a fact that I could not help welcoming with relief, for if I had first to read all that men have written about women, then all that women have written about men, the aloe that flowers once in a hundred years would flower twice before I could set pen to paper. So, making a perfectly arbitrary choice of a dozen volumes or so, I sent my slips of paper to lie in the wire tray, and waited in my stall, among the other seekers for the essential oil of truth.

* * *

2.

At this moment, as so often happens in London, there was a complete lull and suspension of traffic. Nothing came down the street; nobody passed. A single leaf detached itself from the plane tree at the end of the street, and in that pause and suspension fell. Somehow it was like a signal falling, a signal pointing to a force in things which one had overlooked. It seemed to point to a river, which flowed past, invisibly, round the corner, down the street, and took people and eddied them along, as the stream at Oxbridge had taken the undergraduate in his boat and the dead leaves. Now it was bringing from one side of the street to the other diagonally a girl in patent leather boots, and then a young man in a maroon overcoat; it was also bringing a taxi-cab; and it brought all three together at a point directly beneath my window; where the taxi stopped; and the girl and the young man stopped; and they got into the taxi; and then the cab glided off as if it were swept on by the current elsewhere.

The sight was ordinary enough; what was strange was the rhythmical order with which my imagination had invested it; and the fact that the ordinary sight of two people getting into a cab had the power to communicate something of their own seeming satisfaction. The sight of two people coming down the street and meeting at the corner seems to ease the mind of some strain, I thought, watching the taxi turn and make off. Perhaps to think, as I had been thinking these two days, of one sex as distinct from the other is an effort. It interferes with the unity of the mind. Now that effort had ceased and that unity had been restored by seeing two people come together and get into a taxi-cab. The mind is certainly a very mysterious organ, I reflected, drawing my head in from the window, about which nothing whatever is known, though we depend upon it so completely. Why do I feel that there are severances and oppositions in the mind, as there are strains from obvious causes on the body? What does one mean by 'the unity of the mind'? I pondered, for clearly the mind has so great a power of concentrating at any point at any moment that it seems to have no single state of being. It can separate itself from the people in the street, for example, and think of itself as apart from them, at an upper window looking down on them. Or it can think with other people spontaneously, as, for instance, in a crowd waiting to hear some piece of news read out. It can think back through its fathers or through its mothers, as I have said that a woman writing thinks back through her mothers. Again if one is a woman one is often surprised by a sudden splitting off of consciousness, say in walking down Whitehall, when from being the natural inheritor of that civilization, she becomes, on the contrary, outside of it, alien and critical. Clearly the mind is always altering its focus, and bringing the world into different perspectives. But some of these states of mind seem, even if adopted spontaneously, to be less comfortable than others. In order to keep oneself continuing in them one is unconsciously holding something back, and gradually the repression becomes an effort. But there may be some state of mind in which one could continue without effort because nothing is required to be held back. And this perhaps, I thought, coming in from the window, is one of them. For certainly when I saw the couple

Other literature

24. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

get into the taxi-cab the mind felt as if, after being divided, it had come together again in a natural fusion. The obvious reason would be that it is natural for the sexes to co-operate. One has a profound, if irrational, instinct in favour of the theory that the union of man and woman makes for the greatest satisfaction, the most complete happiness. But the sight of the two people getting into the taxi and the satisfaction it gave me made me also ask whether there are two sexes in the mind corresponding to the two sexes in the body, and whether they also require to be united in order to get complete satisfaction and happiness?

* * *

3.

I told you in the course of this paper that Shakespeare had a sister; but do not look for her in Sir Sidney Lee's life of the poet. She died young – alas, she never wrote a word. She lies buried where the omnibuses now stop, opposite the Elephant and Castle. Now my belief is that this poet who never wrote a word and was buried at the cross-roads still lives. She lives in you and in me, and in many other women who are not here to-night, for they are washing up the dishes and putting the children to bed. But she lives; for great poets do not die; they are continuing presences; they need only the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh. This opportunity, as I think, it is now coming within your power to give her. For my belief is that if we live another century or so – I am talking of the common life which is the real life and not of the little separate lives which we live as individuals – and have five hundred a year each of us and rooms of our own; if we have the habit of freedom and the courage to write exactly what we think; if we escape a little from the common sitting-room and see human beings not always in their relation to each other but in relation to reality; and the sky, too, and the trees or whatever it may be in themselves; if we look past Milton's bogey, for no human being should shut out the view; if we face the fact, for it is a fact, that there is no arm to cling to, but that we go alone and that our relation is to the world of reality and not only to the world of men and women, then the opportunity will come and the dead poet who was Shakespeare's sister will put on the body which she has so often laid down. Drawing her life from the lives of the unknown who were her forerunners, as her brother did before her, she will be born. As for her coming without that preparation, without that effort on our part, without that determination that when she is born again she shall find it possible to live and write her poetry, that we cannot expect, for that would be impossible. But I maintain that she would come if we worked for her, and that so to work, even in poverty and obscurity, is worth while.

* * *

Poetry

25. Robert Browning, *Selected Poems*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of Robert Browning.

1.

Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister

I

Gr-r-r – there go, my heart's abhorrence!
 Water your damned flower-pots, do!
 If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
 God's blood, would not mine kill you!
 What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming?
 Oh, that rose has prior claims –
 Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
 Hell dry you up with its flames!

II

At the meal we sit together:
Salve tibi! I must hear
 Wise talk of the kind of weather,
 Sort of season, time of year:
Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely
Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt:
What's the Latin name for 'parsley'?
 What's the Greek name for Swine's Snout?

III

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,
 Laid with care on our own shelf!
 With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
 And a goblet for ourself,
 Rinsed like something sacrificial
 Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps –
 Marked with L. for our initial!
 (He-he! There his lily snaps!)

IV

Saint, forsooth! While brown Dolores
 Squats outside the Convent bank
 With Sanchicha, telling stories,
 Steeping tresses in the tank,
 Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs,
 – Can't I see his dead eye glow,
 Bright as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?
 (That is, if he'd let it show!)

V

When he finishes refection,
 Knife and fork he never lays
 Cross-wise, to my recollection,
 As do I, in Jesu's praise.
 I the Trinity illustrate,
 Drinking watered orange-pulp –
 In three sips the Arian frustrate;
 While he drains his at one gulp.

VI

Oh, those melons? If he's able
 We're to have a feast! so nice!
 One goes to the Abbot's table,
 All of us get each a slice.
 How go on your flowers? None double?
 Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
 Strange! – And I, too, at such trouble,
 Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

VII

There's a great text in Galatians,
 Once you trip on it, entails
 Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
 One sure, if another fails:
 If I trip him just a-dying,
 Sure of heaven as sure can be,
 Spin him round and send him flying
 Off to hell, a Manichee?

VIII

Or, my scrofulous French novel
 On grey paper with blunt type!
 Simply glance at it, you grovel
 Hand and foot in Belial's gripe:
 If I double down its pages
 At the woeful sixteenth print,
 When he gathers his greengages,
 Ope a sieve and slip it in't?

IX

Or, there's Satan! – one might venture
 Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave
 Such a flaw in the indenture
 As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
 Blasted lay that rose-acacia
 We're so proud of! *Hy, Zy, Hine . . .*
 'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratiâ*
Ave, Virgo! Gr-r-r – you swine!

* * *

Poetry

25. Robert Browning, *Selected Poems*

2.

Fra Lippo Lippi

'So, boy, you're minded,' quoth the good fat father
 Wiping his own mouth, 'twas refection-time, –
 'To quit this very miserable world?
 Will you renounce' . . . 'the mouthful of bread?' thought I;
 By no means! Brief, they made a monk of me;
 I did renounce the world, its pride and greed,
 Palace, farm, villa, shop and banking-house,
 Trash, such as these poor devils of Medici
 Have given their hearts to – all at eight years old.
 Well, sir, I found in time, you may be sure,
 'Twas not for nothing – the good bellyful,
 The warm serge and the rope that goes all round,
 And day-long blessed idleness beside!
 'Let's see what the urchin's fit for' – that came next.
 Not overmuch their way, I must confess.
 Such a to-do! They tried me with their books:
 Lord, they'd have taught me Latin in pure waste!
Flower o' the clove,
All the Latin I construe is, 'amo' I love!
 But, mind you, when a boy starves in the streets
 Eight years together, as my fortune was,
 Watching folk's faces to know who will fling
 The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch he desires,
 And who will curse or kick him for his pains, –
 Which gentleman processional and fine,
 Holding a candle to the Sacrament,
 Will wink and let him lift a plate and catch
 The droppings of the wax to sell again,
 Or holla for the Eight and have him whipped, –
 How say I? – nay, which dog bites, which lets drop
 His bone from the heap of offal in the street, –
 Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike,
 He learns the look of things, and none the less
 For admonition from the hunger-pinch.
 I had a store of such remarks, be sure,
 Which, after I found leisure, turned to use.
 I drew men's faces on my copy-books,
 Scrawled them within the antiphony's marge,
 Joined legs and arms to the long music-notes,
 Found eyes and nose and chin for A's and B's,
 And made a string of pictures of the world
 Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun,
 On the wall, the bench, the door. The monks looked black.
 'Nay,' quoth the Prior, 'turn him out, d'ye say?
 In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark.
 What if at last we get our man of parts,
 We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese
 And Preaching Friars, to do our church up fine
 And put the front on it that ought to be!
 And hereupon he bade me daub away.

* * *

3.

Confessions

I
 What is he buzzing in my ears?
 'Now that I come to die,
 Do I view the world as a vale of tears?'
 Ah, reverend sir, not I!

II
 What I viewed there once, what I view again
 Where the physic bottles stand
 On the table's edge, – is a suburb lane,
 With a wall to my bedside hand.

III
 That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,
 From a house you could descry
 O'er the garden-wall: is the curtain blue
 Or green to a healthy eye?

IV
 To mine, it serves for the old June weather
 Blue above lane and wall;
 And that farthest bottle labelled 'Ether'
 Is the house o'ertopping all.

V
 At a terrace, somewhere near the stopper,
 There watched for me, one June,
 A girl: I know, sir, it's improper,
 My poor mind's out of tune.

VI
 Only, there was a way . . . you crept
 Close by the side, to dodge
 Eyes in the house, two eyes except:
 They styled their house 'The Lodge.'

VII
 What right had a lounge up their lane?
 But, by creeping very close,
 With the good wall's help, – their eyes might strain
 And stretch themselves to Oes,

VIII
 Yet never catch her and me together,
 As she left the attic, there,
 By the rim of the bottle labelled 'Ether,'
 And stole from stair to stair,

IX
 And stood by the rose-wreathed gate. Alas,
 We loved, sir – used to meet:
 How sad and bad and mad it was –
 But then, how it was sweet!

* * *

Poetry

26. Tina Chang, Nathalie Handal and Ravi Shankar (eds), *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from the Middle East, Asia, and Beyond*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of the poetry set from this text.

1.

In the Grasp of Childhood Fields

Xuân Quỳnh

The Blue Flower

Were those blue flowers there or not
In the trampled field of your childhood?
A lazy stream flowed into the distance from the still valley.
A mist rose over the windows.

Were those blue daisies there or not
In that little schoolhouse, far from the world?
Was that our dream, or was it the flower's
To be so gentle, so dear?

The grass sprouts for a small bird in the forest.
The clear water murmurs in a field of reeds
And my heart is as young as dawn light,
Undiminished as yet by sorrow.
Autumns come and go on the old verandas
Life is not yet marred by sudden separation.
The whole of the trampled field is blue with flowers.
Their fragrance fills the world.
Country girls with silken skin,
Village boys eager in their twenties.
Love everywhere, among people, flowers, grass, earth.
Take turns to the seasons of the fruit harvests. . . .

Were those blue flowers there or not
In those months and years of our childhood?
Was the valley there or not
When I visited you?
Green grasshoppers, the tiny red dragonflies
Hummed above the roads of summer wind.
This the kingdom of our past,

Fresh and smooth as grass in a dream. . . .

You must have believed those flowers were there.
And that the valley of our youth was blue with them.

* * *

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2.

Parsed into Colors

Ravi Shankar

Exile

There's nowhere else I'd rather not be than here,
But here I am nonetheless, dispossessed,
Though not quite, because I never owned
What's been taken from me, never have belonged
In and to a place, a people, a common history.
Even as a child when I was slurred in school—
Towel head, dot boy, camel jockey—
None of the abuse was precise: only Sikhs
Wear turbans, widows and young girls bindis,
Not one species of camel is indigenous to India . . .
If, as Simone Weil writes, to be rooted
Is the most important and least recognized need
Of the human soul, behold: I am an epiphyte.
I conjure sustenance from thin air and the smell
Of both camphor and meatloaf equally repel me.
I've worn a lungi pulled between my legs,
Done designer drugs while subwoofers throbbed,
Sipped masala chai steaming from a tin cup,
Driven a Dodge across the Verrazano in rush hour,
And always to some degree felt extraneous,
Like a meteorite happened upon bingo night.
This alien feeling, honed in aloneness to an edge,
Uses me to carve an appropriate mask each morning.
I'm still unsure what effect it has on my soul.

* * *

Poetry

26. Tina Chang, Nathalie Handal and Ravi Shankar (eds), *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from the Middle East, Asia, and Beyond*

3.

Slips and Atmospheric

Marjorie Evasco

Dreamweavers

We are entitled to our own
definitions of the world
we have in common:

earth	house	(stay)
water	well	(carry)
fire	stove	(tend)
air	song	(sigh)
ether	dream	(die)

and try out new combinations
with key words
unlocking power

house on fire	<i>sing!</i>
stove under water	<i>stay,</i>
earth filled well	<i>die.</i>

The spells and spellings
of our vocabularies
are oracular
in translation.

One woman in Pagnito-an
another in Solentiname
still another in Harxheim
naming
half the world together

<i>can</i>	move their earth
<i>must</i>	house their fire
<i>be</i>	water to their song
<i>will</i>	their dreams well.

* * *

Poetry

27. Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of Sylvia Plath.

1.

Morning Song

Love set you going like a fat gold watch.

[...]

The clear vowels rise like balloons.

Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*,
Faber Modern Classics, 2015

p. 3

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2.

Letter in November

Love, the world

[...]

Golds bleed and deepen, the mouths of Thermopylae.

Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*,
Faber Modern Classics, 2015

pp. 45 and 46

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Poetry

27. Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*

3.

The Munich Mannequins

Perfection is terrible, it cannot have children.

[...]

Voicelessness. The snow has no voice.

Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*,
Faber Modern Classics, 2015
pp. 69 and 70

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Poetry

28. Chris Wallace-Crabbe, *New and Selected Poems*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of Chris Wallace-Crabbe.

1.

In Light and Darkness

In Light and Darkness

Nothing is quite so rococo

[...]

clear till the end of our days.

Chris Wallace-Crabbe, *New and Selected Poems*,
Carcenet, 2013

pp. 62 and 63

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Poetry

28. Chris Wallace-Crabbe, *New and Selected Poems*

2.

The Emotions Are Not Skilled Workers

Now That April's Here
for Peter Steele

Where monotone was, the tips and fledges are uncurling,
[...]
carrying their carnival colours brilliantly through my head.

Chris Wallace-Crabbe, *New and Selected Poems*,
Carcamet, 2013
pp. 84 and 85

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3.

Rungs of Time

Sunset Sky Near Coober Pedy

Streak, dash, fluff, apricot radiation,
[...]

the meaning of what they are is merely IS.

Chris Wallace-Crabbe, *New and Selected Poems*,
Carcamet, 2013
p. 137

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

Poetry

29. Samuel Wagan Watson, *Smoke Encrypted Whispers*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of Samuel Wagan Watson.

1.

2000

of muse, meandering and midnight

white stucco dreaming

sprinkled in the happy dark of my mind
is early childhood and black humour
white stucco dreaming
and a black labrador
an orange and black panel-van
called the 'black banana'
with twenty blackfellas hanging out the back
blasting through the white stucco umbilical
of a working class tribe
front yards studded with old black tyres
that became mutant swans overnight
attacked with a cane knife and a bad white paint job

white stucco dreaming
and snakes that morphed into nylon hoses at the terror
of Mum's scorn
snakes whose cool venom we sprayed onto the white stucco,
temporarily blushing it pink
amid an atmosphere of Saturday morning grass cuttings
and flirtatious melodies of ice-cream trucks
that echoed through little black minds
and sent the labrador insane

chocolate hand prints like dreamtime fraud
laid across white stucco
and mud cakes on the camp stove
that just made Dad see black
no tree safe from treehouse sprawl
and the police cars that crawled up and down the back streets,
peering into our white stucco cocoon
wishing they were with us

* * *

2.

2000

of muse, meandering and midnight

cheap white-goods at the dreamtime sale

if only the alloy-winged angels could perform better
and lift Uluru; a site with grandeur
the neolithic additive missing from that seventh wonder of the
world expo,
under the arms of a neon goddess, under the hammer in
London,
murderers turning trustees
a possession from a death estate
maybe flogged off to the sweet seduction of yen
to sit in the halls of a Swiss bank
or be paraded around Paris' Left Bank
where the natives believe
that art breathed for the first time;
culture, bohemian and bare and maybe brutal
and how the critics neglect the Rubenesque roundness of a
bora-ring
unfolded to an academia of art
yes, that pure soil in front of you
the dealers in Manhattan lay back and vomit
they're the genius behind dot paintings and ochre hand prints
rattling studios from the East Side to the Village
and across the ass of designer jeans
porcelain dolls from Soho wanting a part in it so bad
as the same scene discards their shells upon the catwalks
like in the land of the original Dreaming
comatose totems litter the landscape
bargains and half-truths simmer over authenticity
copyright and copious character assassination on the menu
sacred dances available out of the yellow pages
and
cheap white-goods at the Dreamtime sale!

* * *

29. Samuel Wagan Watson, *Smoke Encrypted Whispers*

Poetry

30. Petra White, *A Hunger*

Use two or more of the set passages as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of Petra White.

1.

A Hunger (New poems 2014)
Thirteen Love Poems

Ode on Love

What he has taken of me
I don't even want back,
I don't want to want back.
This new happiness holds up
a novel mischief that waits in the near.
Why so indispensable?
Before I knew him I did not need him:
if he goes I must replace him,
as if I could. And that circling body-mashing doubt.
How he throws me
into dark and retrieves me!
And with gazes like little rifting flames inhabits me.

What does the bottom-most soul know of this –
that basin of us
concerned only with survival,
collecting residual passion
and washing clean,
shining up that bit of us
that cares nothing?

He is coasting along his own midnight.
The trapping of his breath, the only outward sign,
I devour it like meat,
as if it were him,
tenderly and watchfully in all love's creepiness.

That idea that every lover is the same,
that there's a template, a type,
that what I orbit
is an all-man man
likely to be just like my father,
many desires folded into one bright
bouquet of obsession that springs from the heart like Spring.

Love is a thing, the self's
undoing that it begs for.
He twitches out hot shivers of love he shifts away from,
exalts and voids me
with the economy of a waiter emptying a whole table with
one hand.

Power to love draws the long breath from me.
Petrarch made this a joy, an Other queening distance,
love never shaken by reality, never
whittled by exchange.
I fear whatever we have will puff like a thistle.
And if not?
Mutuality, mutability, love nuanced and grappled, hard.
This seam of encounters can't peg itself down,
it is or isn't, it is high or low, a scythe swinging in, or out.

The self tries to locate him, and itself
in all the moving signifiers of love,
lover and love, meaning and feeling,
thing that says, love this one, not another.
I lie in bed scratching at the night.
Absent, his beauty
evaporates. He flickers before me,
knowable-unknowable, central lover, man-figure
skating so sweetly at the edge of a beauty.
How I hope against. How I want to know if he.
And love dares the self.
To risk what there is in hope of havocking more to risk.
Trying not to try to purloin him whole
but keep him near – to tell my heart so stupid!
The drawbridge clatters up.

* * *

Poetry

30. Petra White, *A Hunger*

2.

The Simplified World (2010)

Woman and Dog

A woman and a dog walked all day
beside the non-moving canal.
People who walk dogs displace themselves:

the dog sniffs and leads, harnesses
a human soul, spirit and flesh
willing or not. Its human-dog eyes

cradle the walkable world – a happy place –
a brimming here-and-yet. The canal
neither followed nor lagged behind.

There was the simplified world, on either side, green
fields and red houses. There was the little pub
they always got to.

So long they trudged, two bodies and one
soul, so many miles,
the paws began to bleed.

Little flecks of ruby blood glittered the black
rubbery pads, as if the dog was inking out
all the sadness of the woman.

And the woman, being just strong enough,
gathered up the dog (not a small one)
and carried it all the way home, wherever that was.

* * *

3.

The Incoming Tide (2007)

Southbank

9

Skill tugs at the muscles, drives
the bones, the mind keen,
the child perfecting her scales,
blocking the din.

The child understands the adults,
ignores them, thinks she is innocent,
making herself. She reads
the dictionary, the bible,
dinnerplates of language,
at school dwarfs herself
with long words.
Priggish, pigeon-toed,
she walks her book in the schoolyard, stalks
blind through netball.

The thing we work for (rarely
work for its own sake) vanishes;
work persists, then too is lost:
the black hole of energy burns
through hands and minds.

A heaven somewhere,
a palm tree, a beach, a child, an apartment,
the quiet hum of one's power
of being that flexes around days,
carries futures, saying
world is made for me as I make it:
small enough to garden by hand, large
enough to outscope me,
for I must not lose surprise: this illusion
I with my labour can sustain.

10

Elevators dim-lit, dark-polished all day
by a woman from Bosnia, cheerful as Sisyphus,
who greets you with a suicidal smile, her trolley
of rank cleaning products makes her sneeze,

fills her eyes with red wires; she apologises, grins.
She scales her never-done job, a moonwalker

trailing her cargo through the semi-mirrored
obsidian tangle of offices, herself glowing back at her.

You ride up with her, pin-prick halogen lights,
mirrored walls you vanish into, she polishes.

* * *

Assessment criteria

Section A will be assessed against the following criteria:

- development of an informed, relevant and plausible interpretation of the text
- understanding and analysis of the text, demonstrated through the use of textual evidence
- analysis and evaluation of the views and values foregrounded in the topic and underlying one literary perspective of the text, and awareness of how these views and values relate to the text
- expressive, fluent and coherent use of language and development of ideas

Section B will be assessed against the following criteria:

- understanding of the text, demonstrated in a relevant and plausible interpretation
- ability to write expressively and coherently to present an interpretation
- understanding of how views and values may be suggested in the text
- analysis of how key passages and/or moments in the text contribute to an interpretation
- analysis of the features of the text and how they contribute to an interpretation
- analysis and close reading of textual details to support a coherent and detailed interpretation of the text

END OF TASK BOOK

