NORTH SYDNEY BOYS HIGH SCHOOL

Major Assessment Task

Monday 24TH June 2019

ENGLISH ADVANCED

Paper 1 Common Module: Texts and Human Experiences

HSC Weighting: 10%

General Instructions

- Reading time - 10 minutes
- Working time - 1 hour and 30 minutes
- Write using black or blue pen with clarity
- Write in a new booklet for each section

Total Marks – 40

Section I

20 marks (5%)

- Attempt Questions a to e
- Allow about 45 minutes for this section
- Write in a new booklet

Section II

20 marks (5%)

- Attempt Question 2
- Allow about 45 minutes for this section
- Write in a new booklet

Section I

20 marks

Attempt Question 1 – Parts a to e IN THE SECTION 1 WRITING BOOKLET

Allow about 45 minutes for this section

In your answer you will be assessed on how well you:

- Demonstrate understanding of human experiences in texts
- Analyse, explain and assess the ways human experience are represented in texts

Question 1 (20 marks)

Examine Texts One, Two, Three and Four carefully and then answer the questions on page 7.

Text One – Photograph – Tank Man



Text Two – Poem

Valentine by Carol Ann Duffy

Not a red rose or a satin heart.

I give you an onion.
It is a moon wrapped in brown paper.
It promises light
like the careful undressing of love.

Here.
It will blind you with tears
like a lover.
It will make your reflection
a wobbling photo of grief.

I am trying to be truthful.

Not a cute card or a kissogram.

I give you an onion.
Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips,
possessive and faithful
as we are,
for as long as we are.

Take it.
Its platinum loops shrink to a wedding ring,
if you like.
Lethal.
Its scent will cling to your fingers,
cling to your knife.

Text Three – Discursive Magazine Article (extract)

'Environmental storytelling can help spread big ideas for saving the planet'

Tackling climate change will require huge changes in society. Decarbonising energy, restoring habitat and making food supply sustainable are all critical, but methods for motivating these actions have typically taken the wrong approach – by highlighting the urgency of the issues and the disastrous consequences of failing to act.

Research increasingly suggests that trying to promote behavioural change through fear can be counterproductive, leading to anxiety or depression that results in an issue being avoided, denied or met with a sense of helplessness. However, in education, news and fiction, stories with positive role models and which focus on the positive outcomes of solutions are much more likely to inspire action to solve it.

The power of positive stories

I set out to explore the impact of such stories. As part of my research, 91 volunteers were given two stories to read, each concerned with the negative impacts of climate change: one about a woman caught in a flood and the other set at the end of the world.

The same readers were also exposed to two positive stories: one about a terrorist planting a flower bomb, which populates a bare area with flowers, the other about a young boy who, having watched Blue Planet, takes to collecting plastic to stop it entering the oceans – starting with his fish tank. Afterwards the readers were asked how the stories made them feel and to reflect on what kinds of behaviours they inspired.

While the negative stories motivated action for a few, most said they were discouraged. "I'd rather not think about it," said one. "It made me angry and I switched off," said another. Many also reported a sense of passive despair. "I felt hopelessness. If indeed, the heavy rain was caused by climate change, what can we do about it?"

However, there were no signs of avoidance among readers of the positive stories.

"It made me want to flower bomb land and do something positive and I felt happier after reading it," said one reader.

"I felt inspired by the way the characters behaved … [the story] made me think about what I could do."

This is concerning because almost all stories set in the future, whether in books, films or TV shows, are dystopian. The popular TV show Black Mirror tells cautionary tales about modern life and technology with often terrifying consequences. These stories elicit anxiety, pessimism and a feeling of passive fatalism.

I realised from my research that we desperately need cultural offerings with positive visions of what a sustainable society might look like, to inspire hope and positive change.

It can be hard for politicians to support green policies such as these when green issues evoke catastrophe in the minds of voters they'd rather not think about. Reframing issues in terms of their solutions and highlighting them through engaging characters and stories might be a more effective way to encourage change.

The transition to a sustainable society requires profound changes, but to imagine how all of these aspects can come together is currently the domain of creative fiction. If we want a better world then the first step is to imagine one.

Text Four – Prose extract

'The Weight of a Human Heart' – Ryan O'Neil

My mother, Margaret Hately was a short-story writer. In the few photographs I have of her she is carrying a book, holding it against her chest as if she were suckling it. There are no photographs of my father. My mother destroyed them when he left her, a month before I was born. I only know him from the parts of him she put in her stories – a limp, a way of reading the newspaper at arm's length. Whilst my mother wrote, my father was made of words.

When I was a child, I loved to watch my mother writing. She would sit at her scarred wooden desk under the stained-glass window in the hallway, the sunlight harlequinning the paper before her. Even now I see the top third of any page in a book as green, the middle blue, and the lower third as yellow. As she wrote, she would keep a cigarette burning in the ashtray at her elbow, occasionally blowing smoky O's into the air. At these times I knew not to bother her. I liked to paint, and she never minded the mess as long as I was quiet. In my childish pictures my mother had eleven fingers, one of them being the pen she always held in her right hand. The morning was for writing and the afternoon for reading.

At bedtime my mother would lie beside me, and instead of 'The Three Bears' or 'Rumpelstiltskin', she would read aloud the story she had been working on that day, making

corrections as she went along. Drifting into sleep, I listened to the stories in her first collection many times. When she wasn't at her desk, she was always making notes.

By the time I was thirteen years old, I had come to realise I would always be a minor character in my mother's life. She had never done more than sketch me in.

I had no desire to study English as my mother wished. In fact, I was in danger of failing the subject at school. I just couldn't bear to open the books. I think my mother secretly hoped that by the time I went to university, her stories would be part of the curriculum and I would be required to read them along with Lawson and the rest. But I was a feminist. I didn't want to study the words of dead white males. I wanted to be a doctor, and I was accepted to study medicine in Sydney. On the day I was to leave, my mother was sitting at her desk as usual, the light through the stained glass colouring the smoke that hung over her head.

"Ah, Barbara," she said. "What do you think of this? Is it too much?"

"I'm going now, Mum," I said, shouldering my bag.

She looked down at the paper in front of her.

"Wait, don't go yet. I love you," she said.

"What?" I said.

She turned to look at me, breathing out cigarette smoke.

"This dialogue from the story. 'Wait don't go yet. I love you.' Is it too much do you think?"

"No, Mum. It's not too much," I said. "It's hardly enough," and I left.

Texts One, Two, Three and Four – Photograph, Poem, Magazine Article, Prose Extract

Marks

Text One – Photograph

a) Explain the way the image represents the power of the individual to challenge collective human experiences. **2**

Text Two – Poem

b) How does the poet's use of extended metaphor reflect the complexity of human emotions and experiences? **3**

Text Three – Magazine Article

c) Explore how the article represents the importance of imagination to the human experience. **4**

Text Four – Prose Extract

d) Analyse how Text 4 uses the role of storytelling to express anomalies in human behaviour and motivations. **4**

Texts One, Two, Three and Four – Photograph, Poem, Magazine article, Prose Extract

e) Compare how two texts ignite new ideas and invite the responder to see the world differently. **7**

End of Question 1

Section II (20 Marks)

Attempt Question 2 IN THE SECTION 2 WRITING BOOKLET

Allow about 45 minutes for this section

Your answer will be assessed on how well you:

- Demonstrate understanding of human experiences in texts
- Analyse, explain and assess the ways human experiences are represented in texts
- Organise, develop and express ideas using language appropriate to audience, purpose and context

Question 2 (20 marks)

"Though melancholy[1] and disillusionment[2] are characteristic of Slessor's poetry, individualism and a zest for life are also prominent features."

Analyse how Slessor explores the paradoxes and inconsistences of the human experience in his poems.

The prescribed poems are:

- ***Wild Grapes***
- ***Gulliver***
- ***Out of Time***
- ***Vesper-Song of Reverend Samuel Marsden***
- ***William Street***
- ***Beach Burial***

End of Examinationn

[1] Melancholy - a feeling of pensive sadness, typically with no obvious cause.
[2] Disillusionment - a feeling of disappointment resulting from the discovery that something is not as good as one believed it to be.