



NESA Examination Number

ENGLISH ADVANCED – MAJOR ASSESSMENT - 2020

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
- A stimulus booklet is provided

Total Marks – 40

Section I

20 marks (5%)

- Attempt Questions 1-5
- Complete the answers in this booklet
- Allow about 45 minutes for this section

Section II

20 marks (5%)

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

This paper MUST NOT be removed from the examination room



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Major Assessment – Paper 1 Texts and Human Experiences

Section II

20 Marks

Answer the essay question on the other side of this page

Allow about 45 minutes for this section

Answer the essay question in the Section II Writing Booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

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 (20 Marks)

Slessor's distinctive poetic vision invites us to challenge presumptions and engage in a process of introspection.

Explore this statement with close reference to your prescribed text.

The prescribed poems are:

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



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STIMULUS BOOKLET

Text 1 – Poem

Text 2 – Article Extract

Text 3 – Essay Extract

Text 4 – Prose Fiction Extract

Text 1 – Poem - My father began as a god - Ian Mudie

My father began as a god,
full of heroic tales of days when he was young.
His laws were as immutable
as if brought down from Sinai,
which indeed he thought they were.

He fearlessly lifted me to heaven
by a mere swing to his shoulder,
and made me a godling
by seating me astride
our milch-cow's back, and, too,
upon the great white gobbler
of which others went in constant fear.

Strange then how he shrank and shrank
until by my time of adolescence
he had become a foolish small old man
with silly and outmoded views
of life and of morality.

Stranger still that
as I became older
his faults and intolerances
scaled away into the past,
revealing virtues
such as honesty, generosity, integrity.

Strangest of all
how the deeper he recedes into the grave
the more I see myself
as just one more of all the little men
who creep through life
not knee-high to this long dead god.

Text 2 – Article - Racism is not human nature. A work of fiction can help us understand that’- Randa Abdel-Fattah

The sheer weight of racist legacy and entrenched Islamophobic narratives was made clear to me all too often while researching Islamophobia, racism and multiculturalism in Australia. What struck me was the common sense, vernacular quality to much of the rhetoric I encountered.

One particular “common sense” claim I repeatedly heard in my research is that racism is “part of human nature”. This was a mantra offered to me among people in far-right racist movements *and* among many on the white left. I recall mingling with guests at a writers’ event when another author – a white middle class male who enjoys a successful media career – proceeded to explain to me that racism was just about people “being afraid of what they don’t know”. “Racism,” he declared, “is just human nature.”

One of the problems with this oft-cited statement is that framing racism as primordial and intrinsic to the human condition empties racism of its politics and ignores Australia’s histories and continuing logics of racial exclusion, thinking and expression. One of the things that interests me is how these racial logics and hegemonic scripts infiltrate habits of thinking, speaking and power relations in everyday life.

If racism is not “human nature”, but learned behaviour and practices arising out of institutional, social, legal and historical power relations, political scripts, government policies and media framings, then don’t we need to spend more time understanding how such behaviour is learned and, even more importantly, what it takes to resist the sheer weight of racist ideology?

These are some of the questions I set out to explore in my latest young adult fiction novel When Michael Met Mina. The idea for the novel came to me while attending an anti-asylum seeker rally during my fieldwork. A character popped into my head. Well, two characters in fact. One was a young Afghan refugee. A “boat person” we see maligned and stigmatised by callous politicians and ruthless media. Bright, fierce, courageous, scarred, she wouldn’t budge from my head. I called her Mina. I thought about what it would mean for this young girl to have fled Afghanistan, be locked up in detention, grow up in western Sydney, only for me to then throw her into a private school in the lower north shore of Sydney.

The other person who popped into my head was a boy called Michael, whose middle-class, liberal and quite likeable parents have started an anti-immigration/Islam/asylum seeker/multiculturalism political organisation called “Aussie Values”.

As I interviewed people about their “fears of being swamped by boats”, the “Islamisation of Australia”, and the so-called “clash of civilisations”, I wondered how it would feel to be a teenager growing up in a family peddling such racism and paranoia. How do you “unlearn” racism? How do you find the courage to question your parents’ beliefs? How do you rise to the challenge of interrogating the sensationalised narratives that bombard us in tabloid media, talkback radio, current affairs and breakfast talk programs and public debates? That’s when I decided to write a story that took these two characters, Michael and Mina, and threw them at each other.

So much of Michael’s journey involves him confronting not only his privilege, and the power it offers him, but also how his privilege burdens him with the responsibility of challenging racism and exposing the myths and tropes that circulate so widely and easily in our society. Mina is blunt with Michael that she is not going to “rescue” him from his racism; “babysit” him through his “enlightenment”.

“The first step,” she tells him, “would be for you to realise that you need to figure it out on your own.”

But unlike much of the writing we see around race, I wanted to be clear that ultimately it is not up to racialised people to do all the hard work that is needed to dismantle the racial logics of our society. It is time we unsettle the common sense understanding that racism is human nature, behaviour and attitude. In doing so, we can start to see how those who benefit from racism bear the greatest responsibility for fighting it. It is my hope that Michael, a 17-year old boy, might offer some insights into the struggle and rewards of taking up that fight.

Text 3 - Non-Fiction Article - In the 21st century, we are all migrants – Mohsin Hamid

ALL OF US are descended from migrants. Our species, *Homo sapiens*, did not evolve in Lahore, where I am writing these words. Nor did we evolve in Shanghai or Topeka or Buenos Aires or Cairo or Oslo, where you, perhaps, are reading them.

None of us is a native of the place we call home. And none of us is a native to this moment in time. We are not native to the instant, already gone, when this sentence began to be written, nor to the instant, also gone, when it began to be read, nor even to this moment, now, which we enter for the first time and which slips away, has slipped away, is irrevocably lost, except from memory.

To be human is to migrate forward through time, the seconds like islands, where we arrive, castaways, and from which we are swept off by the tide, arriving again and again, in a new instant, on a new island, one we have, as always, never experienced before. Over the course of a life these migrations through the seconds accrue, transform into hours, months, decades. We become refugees from our childhoods, the schools, the friends, the toys, the parents that made up our worlds all gone, replaced by new buildings, by phone calls, photo albums, and reminiscences.

We move through time, through the temporal world, because we are compelled to. We move through space, through the physical world, seemingly because we choose to, but in those choices there are compulsions as well. We move when it is intolerable to stay where we are: when we cannot linger a moment longer, alone in our stifling bedroom, and must go outside and play; when we cannot linger a moment longer, hungry on our parched farm, and must go elsewhere for food. We move because of environmental stresses and physical dangers and the small-mindedness of our neighbors—and to be who we wish to be, to seek what we wish to seek.

If we are all migrants, then possibly there is a kinship between the suffering of the woman who has never lived in another town and yet has come to feel foreign on her own street and the suffering of the man who has left his town and will never see it again. Maybe transience is our mutual enemy, not in the sense that the passage of time can be defeated but rather in the sense that we all suffer from the losses time inflicts.

A species of migrants at last comfortable being a species of migrants. That, for me, is a destination worth wandering to. It is the central challenge and opportunity every migrant offers us: to see in him, in her, the reality of ourselves.

Text 4 – Prose Fiction - The Beekeeper of Aleppo (extract) - Christy Lefteri

I AM SCARED OF MY WIFE'S eyes. She can't see out and no one can see in. Look, they are like stones, grey stones, sea stones. Look at her. Look how she is sitting on the edge of the bed, her nightgown on the floor, rolling around in her fingers and waiting for me to dress her. I am taking my time putting on my shirt and trousers, because I am so tired of dressing her. Look at the folds of her stomach, the colour of desert honey, darker in the creases, and the fine, fine silver lines on the skin of her breasts, and the tips of her fingers with the tiny cuts, where the ridges and valley patterns once were stained with blue or yellow or red paint. Her laughter was gold once, you would have seen as well as heard it. Look at her, because I think she is disappearing.

'I had a night of scattered dreams,' she says. They filled the room.' Her eyes are fixed a little to the left of me.

I feel sick

'What does that mean?'

'They were broken. My dreams were everywhere. And I didn't know if I was awake or asleep. There were so many dreams, like bees in a room, like the room was full of bees. And I couldn't breathe...And I have pain,' she says.

'Where?'

'Behind my eyes. Really sharp pain.'

I kneel down in front of her and look into her eyes. The blank emptiness in them terrifies me. I take my phone out of my pocket shine the light of the torch into them. Her pupils dilate.

'Do you see anything at all?' I say.

'No.'

'Not even a shadow, a change of tone or colour?'

'Just black.'

I put the phone in my pocket and step away from her. She's been worse since we got here. It's like her soul is evaporating

'Can you take me to the doctor?' she says. 'Because the pain is unbearable!'

'Of course, I say. Soon.'

'When?'

'As soon as we get the papers.'

I'm glad Afra can't see this place. She would like the seagulls though, the crazy way they fly. In Aleppo we were far from the sea. I'm sure she would like to see these birds and maybe even the coast, because she was raised by the sea, while I am from eastern Aleppo where the city meets the desert.

When we got married and she came to live with me. Afra missed the sea so much that she started to paint water, wherever she found it. Throughout the arid plateau region of Syria there are oases and streams and rivers that empty into swamps and small lakes. Before we had Sami, we would follow the water, and she would paint it in oils. There is one painting of the Queiq I wish I could see again. She made the river look like a storm water drain running through the city park. Afra had this way of seeing truth in landscapes. The painting, and its measly river, reminds me of struggling to stay alive. Thirty or so kilometres south of Aleppo the river gives up the struggle of the harsh Syrian steppe and evaporates into the marshes.

I am scared of her eyes. But these damp walls, and the wires in the ceiling, and the billboards - I'm not sure how she would deal with all this, if she could see it. The billboard just outside says that there are too many of us that this island will break under our weight. I'm glad she's blind. I know what that sounds like! If I could give her a key that opened a door into another world, then I would wish for her to see again. But it would have to be a world very different from this one. A place where the sun is just rising, touching the walls around the ancient city and outside those walls, the cell like quarters and the houses and apartments and hotels and narrow alleys and an open-air market where a thousand hanging necklaces shine with that first light, and further away, across the desert land, gold on gold and red on red.