

SECTION A: Unseen Prose and Drama

Answer one question from this section.

1

- Either (a) The following is an extract from *Rebecca* (1938), a novel by Daphne du Maurier. For the first time, the narrator is exploring the room of her husband's previous wife (Rebecca de Winter), who died a year ago. Favell is Rebecca's cousin and Mrs. Danvers, the housekeeper.

Write a critical appreciation of the passage, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by the writer's uses of form, style and language.

I could hear the sound of the sea very plainly. I went to the window and swung back the shutter. Yes, I was standing at the same window where Favell and Mrs Danvers had stood, half an hour ago. The long shaft of daylight made the electric light look false and yellow. I opened the shutter a little more. The daylight cast a white beam upon the bed. It shone upon the glass top of the dressing-table, on the brushes and on the scent bottles. 5

The daylight gave an even greater air of reality to the room. When the shutter was closed and it had been lit by electricity the room had more the appearance of a setting on the stage. The scene set between performances. The curtain having fallen for the night, the evening over, and the first act set for tomorrow's matinee. But the daylight made the room vivid and alive. I forgot the musty smell and the drawn curtains of the other windows. I was a guest again. An uninvited guest. I had strolled into my hostess's bedroom by mistake. Those were her brushes on the dressing-table, that was her dressing-gown and slippers laid out upon the chair. 10

I realized for the first time since I had come into the room that my legs were trembling, weak as straw. I sat down on the stool by the dressing table. My heart no longer beat in a strange excited way. It felt as heavy as lead. I looked around me in the room with a sort of dumb stupidity. Yes, it was a beautiful room. Mrs. Danvers had not exaggerated that first evening. It was the most beautiful room in the house. That exquisite mantelpiece, the ceiling, the carved bedstead, and the curtains hangings, even the clock on the wall and the candlesticks up on the dressing-table beside me, all the things I would have loved and almost worshipped had they been mine. They were not mine though. They belonged to somebody else. I put out my hand and touched the brushes. One was more worn than its fellow. I understood it well. There was always one brush that had a greater use. Often you forgot to use the other, and when they were taken to be washed there was one there was quite clean and untouched. How white and thin my face looked in the glass, my hair hanging lank and straight. Did I always look like this? Surely I had more colour as a rule? The reflection stared back at me, 20
sallow and plain. 25

I got up from the stool and went and touched the dressing-gown on the chair. I picked up the slippers and held them in my hand. I was aware of a growing sense of horror, of horror turning to despair. I touched the quilt on the bed, traced with my fingers the monogram on the nightdress case, R de W, interwoven and interlaced. The letters were corded and strong against the golden satin material. The nightdress was inside the case, thin as gossamer, apricot in color. I touched it, drew it out from the case, put it against my face. It was cold, quite cold. but there was a dim mustiness about it still where the scent had been. The scent of the white azaleas. I folded it, and put it back in the case, and as I did so I noticed with a sick dull aching in my heart that there were creases in the night-dress, the texture was ruffled, it had not been touched or laundered since it was last worn. 30
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On a sudden impulse I moved away from the beard and went back to the little ante-room where I had seen the wardrobes. I opened one of them. It was as I thought. The wardrobe was full of clothes. There were evening dresses here, I caught the shimmer of silver over the top of the white bags that enfolded them. There was a piece of gold brocade. There, next to it, was velvet, wine-colored and soft. There was a train of white satin, dripping on the floor of the wardrobe. Peeping out from a piece of tissue paper on the shelf above was an ostrich feather fan. 45

The wardrobe smelled stuffy, queer. The azaleas scent, so fragrant and delicate in the air, had turned stale inside the wardrobe, tarnishing the silver dresses and the brocade, and the breath of it wafted towards me now from open doors, faded and old. I shut the doors. I went back into the bedroom once again. The gleam of light from the shuttle still shone white and clear on the golden coverlet of the bed, picking out clearly and distinctly the tall sloping capital R of the monogram. 50

Then I heard the step behind me and turning around I saw Mrs Danvers. I shall never forget the expression on the face. Triumphant, gloating, excited in strange unhealthy way. I felt very frightened. 55

'Is anything the matter, Madam?' she said.

I tried to smile at her, and could not. I tried to speak.

'Are you feeling unwell?' She said, coming nearer to me, speaking very softly. I backed away from her. I believe if she had come any closer to me I should have fainted. I felt her breath on my face. 60

'I'm all right, Mrs Danvers,' I said after a moment, 'I did not expect to see you. The fact is, I was looking up at the windows from the lawn. I noticed one of the shutters was not quite close. I came out to see if I could fasten it.'

'I will fasten it', she said, and she went silently across the room and clamped back the shutter. The daylight had gone. The room looked unreal again in the false yellow light. Unreal and ghastly. 65

Or (b) The extract below is from the play *Sepang Loca* (1957) by Filipino playwright Amelia Lapeña Bonifacio. The characters in this scene discuss the commotion caused by a woman named Sepang Loca who has gone missing. "Sepang" is the character's name, followed by the Spanish word "loca," meaning "crazy" or "mad".

Write a critical appreciation of this extract from the play, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by the writer's use of form, style and language.

- Father:* Hummm, soup's good, Mother. Yes, very good; reminds me, we are to bring a jar of coffee to boil for the folks at the Aplaya¹. Quite a confusion going on in the place. I had to send a squad down there late this afternoon. The town's full of curious people. Something happens, a brawl starts in one of the streets and they flock to the spot like flies. The Camino Real² had to be cleared off for the traffic. The cars tooted their horns and the calesas³ jingled their bells until the place sounded like a mess of a marketplace. It took my men two hours to clear that noisy tangle, the motors and horses on one side and the people on the other. I promised we'll be there tonight. 5
- Mother:* What's all this? Not having left the house, this is all very strange to me. Start where you should, Father. Start from the beginning. Oh, something has happened and I did not even know. Oh, this is terrible. Why, it seems that I'm not part of this town at all! 10
- Father:* First, another bowl of soup, Mother. This is very good. Wouldn't you like to have some more, Son? Mother (calling out to her while she stands before the stove), put more, some more for Danilo. By the way, Son (lowering his voice), I did not mean to be so hard. I drink too, you know. Like I always say, Son, a man's entitled to a vice—if he has the pocket for it! Heh! 15
- Mother:* A ladleful for each of you, no more. You must have room for the meat. Now, Mauricio, from the beginning. 20
- Father:* When I left the Aplaya, the place had quieted down, a few of the men stayed. They built a bonfire in the yard and a bamboo crane over the stone wall. 25
- Mother:* (collecting the soup bowls) A bonfire! A bamboo crane! What are all these for? Oh, something exciting has happened, ay, truly and I did not even know.
- Father:* Oh, Mother, I'll tell you everything if you just give me time! Pass the sauce, Son. As I was saying, the men built a bonfire in the yard and a crane over the stone well in Sepang Loca's garden. This morning, it was almost noon I think, old Elena said she heard a baby crying. From Sepang Loca's hut, that is. Old Elena was gathering some camote⁴ tops and she said that she sat up and listened. She ran back to her house and cooked some soup to bring to Sepang Loca. You know how it is with that woman, being alone and as old Elena says, she snarls at anyone who tries to go up to her hut and help her at those times. I should say this Sepang Loca's strong and remarkably well-ordered when her time comes. 30
- Mother:* Such shame! Ay Santisima Madre⁵, ay, such shame! 35

Place with high authority

Depiction of philosopher's chest.

10

Housewife curiously

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ended on argument

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Pity

word of mouth
Mirror Mother.

Aplaya: seaside in both Spanish and Filipino

Camino Real: "royal road" or "king's highway" in Spanish

Calesas: a two-wheeled horse-drawn carriage used in the Philippines

Camote: Sweet potato

Santisima Madre: Most Holy Mother

Father: So old Elena goes there limping, the bowl of soup to stir, as old Elena puts it, to stir Sepang Loca's milk. For the child, you know. But the mother and the child are not in the house. Old Elena said that she looked and looked and they were not in the house. She was alarmed to say the least, she flew out of the hut shrieking that 45
Sepang Loca and her child have vanished. The people came and they started looking all over the place, inside the house and in the garden. Until finally, finally, someone remembered how Sepang Loca goes straight to the well after her child is born. She bathes herself clean, as you know, and the baby too. 50

Mother: Oh, it is a miracle each time—how her babies manage to stay alive. And she too, how she lives on and on. The fire of blood and the ice of water from the well! She's as strong as a carabao⁶, surely, or the devil keeps her. I see no other explanation. Women die of less. No it 55
can't be true. And yet it is, she lives on while her babies grow transplanted in some other houses, each home fearfully waiting for that streak to show. Ay, it is terrible. Ay, such shame, such shame!

Father: They were right! They came upon her after clearing the bushes. She was slumped over the mouth of the stone well, her arms dangling down the slimy inside of the stone wall. 60

Mother: Santisima, and the child!

Father: She must have dropped it. That is what the men are trying to find out.

Mother: It is taking them so long!

Father: They're almost sure. Sepang Loca must have had a spell of dizziness. 65
She isn't as young as she used to be.

Mother: And she's dead!

Father: She was cold and dead when they found her. Must be too much loss of blood.

Mother: Madre Mia, cold and dead!

Father: She isn't as young as she used to be. She isn't as strong. You didn't 70
know about this, Son?

Son: We have moved away from the place more than a month ago. I heard the confusion and saw the crowd from a distance. Guess I wasn't too interested. We worked hard so we could finish much before it got 75
dark. You know, we were afraid it would get dark.

Mother: (reaching out for his hand) Oh, he works hard. Someday, you'll be building bridges and highways, Son. That will be the day, I may be in my grave by that time or still alive, a blabbering old woman, but even now as I think on it, I'm proud of you. Joining town to town, why, even 80
God will be proud!

⁶ Carabao: Philippine water buffalo

Section B: The English Romantic Period (1785-1832)

Answer **one** question from this section, using **two** texts that you have studied.

2

Either (a) Compare some of the ways in which **two** writers from the English Romantic period employ nature to reflect emotions or thoughts. *Human them thinking*

Or (b) With referent to the work of **two** writers from the Romantic period, compare their presentation of unfulfilled desires.

on the sea
↳ Herman stresses
Allegorical thought
symbolism
Line tree
↳ ~~human stresses~~, unhappiness
Allegorical connection.
reverence to nature
3 Pantheism

W Autumn
↳ feeling of melancholy and satisfaction all together
↳ Human idea of mortality
Eclectic
↳ Pantheism, all as one nature, ultimately no.

Section C: Pre-20th Century Writing

JOHN DONNE: Selected Poems

Either (a) 'Donne expresses a sense of loss through a great variety of tone.'

Considering this comment, discuss at least **two** poems in your answer.

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following poem, relating it to Donne's portrayal of reassurance, here and elsewhere in the selection. You should refer to at least **one other** poem in your answer

Song (Sweetest love, I do not go)

Sweetest love, I do not go,
For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
A fitter love for me;
But since that I
Must die at last, 'tis best
To use myself in jest
Thus by feign'd deaths to die.

5

Yesternight the sun went hence,
And yet is here today;
He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor half so short a way:
Then fear not me,
But believe that I shall make
Speedier journeys, since I take
More wings and spurs than he.

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O how feeble is man's power,
That if good fortune fall,
Cannot add another hour,
Nor a lost hour recall! 20

But come bad chance,
And we join to it our strength,
And we teach it art and length,
Itself o'er us to advance.

When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not wind, 25
But sigh'st my soul away;
When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,
My life's blood doth decay.

It cannot be
That thou lov'st me, as thou say'st, 30
If in thine my life thou waste,
That art the best of me.

Let not thy divining heart
Forethink me any ill;
Destiny may take thy part, 35
And may thy fears fulfil;

But think that we
Are but turn'd aside to sleep;
They who one another keep
Alive, ne'er parted be. 40