

Section A: Unseen Prose and Drama

Answer **one** question from this section.

1

- Either (a) The following is an extract from *The Lives of Others* (2014), a novel by Neel Mukherjee. Write a critical appreciation of the passage, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by the writer's use of form, style and language.

It happened like this. On a bright, rain-washed afternoon in October, Bhola stood on the three steps to the garden and watched Som, who had somehow managed to escape Madan-da or Uma-di's supervision, bewitched by dragonflies hovering in the air, flitting about from bush to shrub to unkempt grass. Bhola saw Som freeze for a few seconds, then start to move on the tips of his toes, one step after one careful step, stalking a dragonfly that had landed on a leaf. From a window on the first floor, their father too had his attention caught by the sight of his youngest son creeping up on something in the untidy clump of sparse vegetation under the guava tree. Bhola and Prafullanath watched, immobilised, as if the tiptoed, alert unbreathiness of Som had transmitted itself like an electric current to his watchers, binding them hushed as one. Som edged forward, inch by inch, magically in touch with the atavistic hunter gene in humans, closed in on the unsuspecting insect, his right hand reaching out, his forefinger and thumb brought forward in a pinch, his breath held . . . then he had it. A dragonfly, curled up in an inverted C, was now captive in the tweezers of Som's little fingers. 5 10 15

Prafullanath could not see from upstairs what Som had caught, only his look of amazement. He felt a slight tightness in his chest, but the residue of the hypnotic scene still kept him immobile. Bhola, downstairs, shared the remainder of the same transfixion. A delayed thought was about to take shape in Prafullanath's mind – what if the boy had caught something that could give him a nasty sting or even a poisonous bite? – but it was still held in abeyance. 20

The insect, caught by its folded-up wings, had instantly curved and grasped Som's finger with all the thread-thin limbs in its head and thorax. This caused an unpleasant, rough sensation, and the little boy, somewhat afraid now, loosened his fingers. The dragonfly flew out, free but dazed, and in that instant a brown mynah, which had, in all probability, had its beady yellow-rimmed eye on the captive insect all this while, swooped down from the roof of the house in one graceful arc, caught hold of the dragonfly in mid-air and, without a break in its flight curve, a miraculous hyperbola, ascended back to where it had taken off from, insect clamped in its beak, the crumpled bits of wings and the thin line of the abdomen poking out of that bright-yellow vice. Everything happened in a minute flash of time, but it played out to all three of them, slowed down and stretched. 25 30 35

Som turned his astonished head to follow the bird's flight-path, wheeling around to see it perch on the terrace. The look on his face was such a roil of reactions that Prafullanath's heart turned; all he wanted to do was to rush down to the garden, swoop his little boy up in his arms and make him forget whatever upset he had been caused. Bhola, on the other hand, was in the grip of a twofold marvelling: at the smooth, predatory art of the mynah, so swift, so unerring, and at Som's shock at witnessing this god-knows-how-many-in-one chance of the freak yet perfectly poised hunting and his role in it as a facilitator. 40

It was as if Som were the servant who had been duped into capturing the prize that his master would consume regally; it was the deception that hurt.

45

Spell broken, Bhola ran towards Som, who could only point to the air, in the direction of the opportunistic bird. Then the little boy burst into tears.

Bhola gathered him in his arms, kissed his cheeks and consoled him. 'No, no, my kushu pushu, it's all right, it's all right.'

Som howled and said something that was more garbled by the sobbing than his usual clotted child's speech, then howled some more.

50

Bhola tried to divert his attention by extemporising on a story, an old trick, but so far an effective one. But, for the first time, the words that emerged were not in the shared private language; the world began to be spun in children's Bengali, ordinary, comprehensible, reassuring.

55

By the time Bhola was about five minutes into his telling, Somnath was a figure carved in stone.

- Or (b) In his play, *Justice* (1910), John Galsworthy presents a Mr. Robert Cokeson, junior clerk, speaking with William Falder following his release from prison.

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.

- Falder: I just want a chance, Mr. Cokeson. I've paid for that job a thousand times and more. I have, sir. No one knows. They say I weighed more when I came out than when I went in. They couldn't weigh me here [he touches his head] or here [he touches—his heart, and gives a sort of laugh]. Till last night I'd have thought there was nothing in here at all. 5
- Cokeson: [Concerned] You've not got heart disease?
- Falder: Oh! they passed me sound enough.
- Cokeson: But they got you a place, didn't they?
- Falder: Yes; very good people, knew all about it—very kind to me. I thought I was going to get on first rate. But one day, all of a sudden, the other clerks got wind of it ... I couldn't stick it, Mr. Cokeson, I couldn't, sir. 10
- Cokeson: Easy, my dear fellow, easy!
- Falder: I had one small job after that, but it didn't last.
- Cokeson: How was that? 15
- Falder: It's no good deceiving you, Mr. Cokeson. The fact is, I seem to be struggling against a thing that's all round me. I can't explain it: it's as if I was in a net; as fast as I cut it here, it grows up there. I didn't act as I ought to have, about references; but what are you to do? You must have them. And that made me afraid, and I left. In fact, I'm—I'm afraid all the time now. 20
- [He bows his head and leans dejectedly silent over the table.]
- Cokeson: I feel for you—I do really. Aren't your sisters going to do anything for you?
- Falder: One's in consumption¹. And the other— 25
- Cokeson: Ye...es. She told me her husband wasn't quite pleased with you.
- Falder: When I went there—they were at supper—my sister wanted to give me a kiss—I know. But he just looked at her, and said: "What have you come for?" Well, I pocketed my pride and I said: "Aren't you going to give me your hand, Jim? Cis is, I know," I said. "Look here!" he said, "that's all very well, but we'd better come to an understanding. I've been expecting you, and I've made up my mind. I'll give you fifteen pounds to go to Canada with." "I see," I said—"good riddance! No, thanks; keep your fifteen pounds." Friendship's a queer thing when you've been where I have. 30
- Cokeson: I understand. Will you take the fifteen pound from me? [Flustered, as FALDER regards him with a queer smile] Quite without prejudice; I meant it kindly. 35
- Falder: I'm not allowed to leave the country.
- Cokeson: Oh! ye...es—ticket-of-leave²? You aren't looking the thing. 40
- Falder: I've slept in the Park three nights this week. The dawns aren't all poetry there. But meeting her—I feel a different man this morning. I've often thought the being fond of hers the best thing about me; it's sacred, somehow—and yet it did for me. That's queer, isn't it?
- Cokeson: I'm sure we're all very sorry for you. 45
- Falder: That's what I've found, Mr. Cokeson. Awfully sorry for me. [With quiet bitterness] But it doesn't do to associate with criminals!
- Cokeson: Come, come, it's no use calling yourself names. That never did a man any good. Put a face on it.

45
} ~~hesitant~~
} ~~hesitant~~ is
} frustrated at
himself, the
state of his
situation

- Falder: It's easy enough to put a^{ve} face on it, sir, when you're independent. Try it when you're down like me. They talk about giving you your deserts. Well, I think I've had just a bit over. 50
- Cokeson: [Eyeing him askance over his spectacles] I hope they haven't made a Socialist of you. 5
[FALDER is suddenly still, as if brooding over his past self; he utters a peculiar laugh.] 55
- Cokeson: You must give them credit for the best intentions. Really you must. Nobody wishes you harm, I'm sure.
- Falder: I believe that, Mr. Cokeson. Nobody wishes you harm, but they down you all the same. (This feeling—[He stares round him, as though at something closing in] It's crushing me. [With sudden impersonality] I know it is. 60

¹ consumption: tuberculosis

² ticket-of-leave: a permit allowing a convict to leave prison, under certain restrictions, and go to work before having served a full term

RB → language viewed as magic (naming)

WSS → language viewed as (naming and oblation)

Section B: Postcolonial Literature

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

2

Either (a) Compare the ways in which **two** texts you have studied present the relationship between people and place.

Or (b) Compare the ways in which **two** texts you have studied use language to present new perspectives.

① both RB and WSS use language to present new perspectives as ~~fight~~ discomforting
→ otherness, alienation
degrading language (WSS),

② both RB and WSS use language to ~~convey the~~ impose one's control
as a result of being exposed to new perspectives, ~~portraying~~ portraying new
perspectives as undesirable.

③ However, in ~~WSS~~ RB,

Section C: Pre-20th Century Writing

Answer one question from this section.

HENRIK IBSEN: *An Enemy of the People*

7

Peter vs Hovstad.

- Either (a) Discuss the dramatic portrayal of courage and cowardice in the play.
- Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the dramatic presentation of the masses, here and elsewhere in the play.

Dr. Stockmann:	Yes, that's another part of my discovery. And along with that goes the fact that free-thinking is almost exactly the same as morality. That's why I call it downright irresponsible of the <i>Herald</i> to keep putting out this distorted idea, day in day out, that it's the masses, the compact majority that has the monopoly of morality and liberal principles—and that vice and corruption and every kind of depraved idea are an overflow from culture, just as all the filth in our Baths is an overflow from the tannery up at Mölledal! [<i>Uproar and interruptions. DR. STOCKMANN, unperturbed, smiles in his eagerness.</i>] And yet this same <i>Herald</i> can preach about raising the standards of the masses! Good Lord, if what the <i>Herald</i> says is right, raising the level of the masses would amount precisely to toppling them straight over the edge to perdition. But fortunately it's just one of those old lies we've had handed down—this idea that culture is demoralizing. No, stupidity and poverty and ugliness are the things that do the devil's work! A house that isn't aired and swept every day—and my wife Katherine says it ought to be scrubbed as well, but that's a debatable point—anybody living for more than two or three years in <i>that</i> kind of house will end up by having no moral sense left whatsoever. No oxygen, no conscience! And there must be an awful lot of houses in this town short of oxygen, it seems, if the entire compact majority is so irresponsible as to want to build the prosperity of the town on a quagmire of lies and deceit.	5 10 15 20
Aslaksen:	I cannot allow such abusive remarks to be directed at the entire community.	
A man:	I move that the Chairman rule the speaker out of order!	25
Angry voices:	Yes, yes! That's right. Out of order!	
Dr. Stockmann	[<i>flaring up</i>]: Then I'll shout out the truth on every street corner! I'll write to all the other newspapers! I'll see that the whole country gets to know what's going on here!	
Hovstad:	It might almost seem that Dr. Stockmann is set on ruining the town.	30
Dr. Stockmann:	I love this town so much that I'd rather destroy it than see it prosper on a lie.	
Aslaksen:	That's putting it pretty strongly.	
	[<i>Uproar and whistles. MRS. STOCKMANN coughs in vain; the DOCTOR no longer hears her.</i>]	35
Hovstad	[<i>shouting above the din</i>]: Any man who wants to destroy a whole community must be a public enemy.	
Dr. Stockmann	[<i>with rising temper</i>]: When a place has become riddled with lies, who cares if it's destroyed? I say it should simply be razed to the ground!	

And all the people living by these lies should be wiped out, like vermin! 40
 You'll have the whole country infested in the end, so that eventually the
 whole country deserves to be destroyed. And if it ever comes to that,
 then I'd say with all my heart: let it all be destroyed, let all its people be
 wiped out!

A man [in the crowd]: That's the talk of an enemy of the people! 45
Billing: That, God damn me, was the voice of the people!
The whole crowd [shouting]: Yes! Yes! He's an enemy of the people. He hates his
 country. He hates his people.

Aslaksen: As a citizen of this country, and as an individual, I am profoundly 50
 shocked by what I have just had to listen to. Dr. Stockmann has
 betrayed himself in a way I should never have dreamed possible. I
 must therefore, with great regret, associate myself with the opinion that
 has just been expressed by my honourable fellow citizens, and I
 propose we embody this opinion in the form of a resolution. I suggest
 something like this: 'The meeting declares that it considers Dr. Thomas 55
 Stockmann, Medical Officer to the Baths, to be an enemy of the
 people.'

[A storm of applause and cheers. A number of people crowd around
 DR. STOCKMANN, cat-calling. MRS. STOCKMANN and PETRA have
 risen. MORTEN and EYLIF fight with the other schoolboys who have 60
 also been booing. Some of the grown-ups separate them.]

(from Act 4)