**Bangor University**

**School of English Literature**

**Scholarship Exam Paper 2019**

**Time Allowed: 2 hours**

**You must answer two questions.**

**Answer one question from Section A and one question from Section B.**

**Section A**

**Write a close critical analysis on one of the following prose extracts.**

**Extract One: *The Good Soldier***

This is the saddest story I have ever heard. We had known the Ashburnhams for nine seasons of the town of Nauheim with an extreme intimacy—or, rather with an acquaintanceship as loose and easy and yet as close as a good glove's with your hand. My wife and I knew Captain and Mrs Ashburnham as well as it was possible to know anybody, and yet, in another sense, we knew nothing at all about them. This is, I believe, a state of things only possible with English people of whom, till today, when I sit down to puzzle out what I know of this sad affair, I knew nothing whatever. Six months ago I had never been to England, and, certainly, I had never sounded the depths of an English heart. I had known the shallows.

I don't mean to say that we were not acquainted with many English people. Living, as we perforce lived, in Europe, and being, as we perforce were, leisured Americans, which is as much as to say that we were un-American, we were thrown very much into the society of the nicer English. Paris, you see, was our home. Somewhere between Nice and Bordighera provided yearly winter quarters for us, and Nauheim always received us from July to September. You will gather from this statement that one of us had, as the saying is, a "heart", and, from the statement that my wife is dead, that she was the sufferer.

[This is the opening passage of Ford’s Madox Ford’s novel *The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion* (1915).]

**Extract Two: *Invisible Man***

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of those Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids--and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination--indeed, everything and anything except me.

Nor is my invisibility exactly a matter of a bio-chemical accident to my epidermis. That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality. I am not complaining, nor am I protesting either. It is sometimes advantageous to be unseen, although it is most often rather wearing on the nerves. Then too, you're constantly being bumped against by those of poor vision. Or again, you often doubt if you really exist. You wonder whether you aren’t simply a phantom in other people’s minds. Say, a figure in a nightmare which the sleeper tries with all his strength to destroy. It’s when you feel like this that, out of resentment, you begin to bump people back. And, let me confess, you feel that way most of the time. You ache with the need to convince yourself that you do exist in the real world, that you’re a part of all the sound and anguish, and you strike out with your fists, you curse and you swear to make them recognize you. And, alas, it’s seldom successful.

One night I accidentally bumped into a man, and perhaps because of the near darkness he saw me and called me an insulting name. I sprang at him, seized his coat lapels and demanded that he apologize. He was a tall blond man, and as my face came close to his he looked insolently out of his blue eyes and cursed me, his breath hot in my face as he struggled. I pulled his chin down sharp upon the crown of my head, butting him as I had seen the West Indians do, and I felt his flesh tear and the blood gush out, and I yelled, “*Apologize! Apologize!*”

[This is the opening passage of Ralph Ellison’s novel *Invisible Man* (1952).]

**Extract Three [‘I Used to Live Here Once’. This is a complete short story]**

She was standing by the river looking at the stepping stones and remembering each one. There was the round unsteady stone, the pointed one, the flat one in the middle — the safe stone where you could stand and look around. The next one wasn’t so safe for when the river was full the water flowed over it and even when it showed dry it was slippery. But after that it was easy and soon she was standing on the other side.

The road was much wider than it used to be but the work had been done carelessly. The felled trees had not been cleared away and the bushes looked trampled. Yet it was the same road and she walked along feeling extraordinarily happy.

It was a fine day, a blue day. The only thing was that the sky had a glassy look that she didn’t remember. That was the only word she could think of. Glassy. She turned the corner, saw that what had been the old pave had been taken up, and there too the road was much wider, but it had the same unfinished look.

She came to the worn stone steps that led up to the house and her heart began to beat. The screw pine was gone, so was the mock summer house called the ajoupa, but the clove tree was still there and at the top of the steps the rough lawn stretched away, just as she remembered it. She stopped and looked towards the house that had been added to and painted white. It was strange to see a car standing in front of it.

There were two children under the big mango tree, a boy and a little girl, and she waved to them and called “Hello” but they didn’t answer her or turn their heads. Very fair children, as Europeans in the West Indies so often are: as if the white blood is asserting itself against all odds.

The grass was yellow in the hot sunlight as she walked towards them. When she was quite close she called again, shyly: “Hello.” Then, “I used to live here once,” she said.

Still they didn’t answer. When she said for the third time “Hello” she was quite near them. Her arms went out instinctively with the longing to touch them.

It was the boy who turned. His grey eyes looked straight into hers. His expression didn’t change. He said: “Hasn’t it gone cold all of a sudden. D’you notice? Let’s go in.”

“Yes, let’s,” said the girl.

Her arms fell to her sides as she watched them running across the grass to the house.

That was the first time she knew.

[This is a complete short story, ‘I Used to Live Here Once’**,** by Jean Rhys, published in 1976]

**[End of Section A]**

**Section B**

**Write a close critical analysis of one of the following poems.**

**In your answers you may wish to discuss some of the following aspects in each poem (but you are not limited to them): love; desire; death; gender; order and chaos; the speaker; tone and mood; style and technique; imagery.**

**Poem One: ‘It Was Not Death’, by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)**

It was not Death, for I stood up,

And all the Dead, lie down —

It was not Night, for all the Bells

Put out their Tongues, for Noon.

It was not Frost, for on my Flesh

I felt Siroccos — crawl —

Nor Fire — for just my Marble feet

Could keep a Chancel, cool —

And yet, it tasted, like them all,

The Figures I have seen

Set orderly, for Burial,

Reminded me, of mine —

As if my life were shaven,

And fitted to a frame,

And could not breathe without a key,

And 'twas like Midnight, some —

When everything that ticked — has stopped —

And Space stares all around —

Or Grisly frosts — first Autumn morns,

Repeal the Beating Ground —

But, most, like Chaos— Stopless — cool —

Without a Chance, or Spar —

Or even a Report of Land —

To justify — Despair.

*Sirocco: a Mediterranean wind*

*Chancel: the space around an altar in a church*

**Poem Two: ‘Ears in the turrets hear’, by Dylan Thomas (1914-53)**

Ears in the turrets hear  
Hands grumble on the door,  
Eyes in the gables see  
The fingers at the locks.  
Shall I unbolt or stay  
Alone till the day I die  
Unseen by stranger-eyes  
In this white house?  
Hands, hold you poison or grapes?  
  
Beyond this island bound  
By a thin sea of flesh  
And a bone coast,  
The land lies out of sound  
And the hills out of mind.  
No birds or flying fish  
Disturbs this island’s rest.  
  
Ears in this island hear  
The wind pass like a fire,  
Eyes in this island see  
Ships anchor off the bay.  
Shall I run to the ships  
With the wind in my hair,  
Or stay till the day I die  
And welcome no sailor?  
Ships, hold you poison or grapes?  
  
Hands grumble on the door,  
Ships anchor off the bay,  
Rain beats the sand and slates.  
Shall I let in the stranger,  
Shall I welcome the sailor,  
Or stay till the day I die?  
  
Hands of the stranger and holds of the ships,  
Hold you poison or grapes?

**Poem Three: ‘An Arundel Tomb’, by Philip Larkin (1922-1985)**

Side by side, their faces blurred,

The earl and countess lie in stone,

Their proper habits vaguely shown

As jointed armour, stiffened pleat,

And that faint hint of the absurd—

The little dogs under their feet.

Such plainness of the pre-baroque

Hardly involves the eye, until

It meets his left-hand gauntlet, still

Clasped empty in the other; and

One sees, with a sharp tender shock,

His hand withdrawn, holding her hand.

They would not think to lie so long.

Such faithfulness in effigy

Was just a detail friends would see:

A sculptor’s sweet commissioned grace

Thrown off in helping to prolong

The Latin names around the base.

They would not guess how early in

Their supine stationary voyage

The air would change to soundless damage,

Turn the old tenantry away;

How soon succeeding eyes begin

To look, not read. Rigidly they

Persisted, linked, through lengths and breadths

Of time. Snow fell, undated. Light

Each summer thronged the glass. A bright

Litter of birdcalls strewed the same

Bone-riddled ground. And up the paths

The endless altered people came,

Washing at their identity.

Now, helpless in the hollow of

An unarmorial age, a trough

Of smoke in slow suspended skeins

Above their scrap of history,

Only an attitude remains:

Time has transfigured them into

Untruth. The stone fidelity

They hardly meant has come to be

Their final blazon, and to prove

Our almost-instinct almost true:

What will survive of us is love.

**[End of Exam Paper]**