



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG

## *DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH*

**MAIN EXAMINATION: JUNE 2015**

**COURSE:** ENGLISH 2A

**TIME:** 3 HOURS

**COURSE CODE:** ENG2A11 and ENG2AA2

**MARKS:** 300

**EXAMINERS:**

1. Prof. R. Frenkel  
Dr B.M. Grogan  
Prof. K. Scherzinger  
Mr T. Tsehlwane
2. Dr J.V. Starfield

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**THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF FIVE (5) PAGES**

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**Instructions:**

1. There are no compulsory questions in this paper.
2. Answer three (3) of the following four questions.
3. Each answer should be approximately three to four (3–4) pages in length.
4. Please answer each question in a separate answer book, and write the number of the question on the front of the answer book.



**QUESTION 1:**

**TENNESSEE WILLIAMS, *A Streetcar Named Desire***

With reference to the following extract from *A Streetcar Named Desire*, write an essay that explores the relationship between Stanley Kowalski and Blanche DuBois. Your essay should contextualise the passage and might discuss the following:

1. Stanley's reasons for being angry with Blanche and the motivation for Blanche's behaviour;
2. The way in which Stanley's use of language differs from Blanche's and what this suggests about their characters; and
3. The significance of the stage directions.

STANLEY:       Stell, it's gonna be all right after she goes and after you've had the baby. It's gonna be all right between you and me the way that it was. You remember that way that it was? Them nights we had together? God, honey, it's gonna be sweet when we can make noise in the night the way that we used to and get the coloured lights going with nobody's sister behind the curtains to hear us!

*Their upstairs neighbours are heard in bellowing laughter at something.* STANLEY chuckles.

Steve an' Eunice...

STELLA: Come on back in. [*She returns to the kitchen and starts lighting the candles on the white cake.*] Blanche?

BLANCHE:       Yes. [*She returns from the bedroom to the table in the kitchen.*] Oh, those pretty, pretty little candles! Oh, don't burn them, Stella.

STELLA: I certainly will.

STANLEY *comes back in.*

BLANCHE:       You ought to save them for baby's birthdays. Oh, I hope candles are going to glow in his life and I hope that his eyes are going to be like candles, like two blue candles lighted in a white cake!

STANLEY [*sitting down*]: What poetry!

BLANCHE:       His Auntie knows candles aren't safe, that candles burn out in little boys' and girls' eyes, or wind blows them out and after that happens, electric light bulbs go on and you see too plainly ... [*She pauses reflectively for a moment.*]

[...]



STANLEY: Goddamn, it's hot in here with the steam from the bathroom.

BLANCHE: I've said I was sorry three times. [*The piano fades out.*] I take hot baths for my nerves. Hydro-therapy, they call it. You healthy Polack, without a nerve in your body, of course you don't know what anxiety feels like!

STANLEY: I am not a Polack. People from Poland are Poles, not Polacks. But what I am is a one hundred per cent. American, born and raised in the greatest country on earth and proud as hell of it, so don't ever call me a Polack. [...] Sister Blanche, I've got a little birthday remembrance for you. [...]

BLANCHE: Why, why – Why, it's a –

STANLEY: Ticket! Back to Laurel! On the Greyhound! Tuesday!

*The Varsouviana music steals in softly and continues playing. STELLA rises abruptly and turns her back. BLANCHE tries to smile. Then she tries to laugh. Then she gives both up and springs from the table and runs into the next room. She clutches her throat and then runs into the bathroom. Coughing, gagging sounds are heard.*

(Scene 8)

(100)

## QUESTION 2:

### ATHOL FUGARD, *Boesman and Lena*

Write an essay in which you discuss Fugard's characterisation of Lena. Your essay should include close reference to the passage below, from the beginning of Act One.

LENA. Let's have *dop* first. I'm feeling the cold. Please, Boesman!

[*Without another look at her he walks off. Lena gets stiffly to her legs and starts to make a fire. A box is positioned to shield it from the wind, then the bundle of firewood untied, the wood itself broken into pieces, a piece of paper to get it started, etc.*]

LENA. Walk off our legs for this! Piece of bread and black tea. No butter ... not even for bruises.

[*A thought crosses her mind. She straightens up, thinks hard for a few seconds, then shakes her head.*]

No. [*She looks around.*] Maybe he's right. What's the difference. I'm here now.

'Here!' After a long life that's a thin slice. No jam on that one. Or *kondens melk*! There's *soeterigheid* for you. Maybe if we get lots of prawns ...

[*Another thought ... She thinks hard ...*]

It was after Redhouse. Collecting prickly pears. Then they found our place here in the bush. Loop, Hotnot! So Hotnot loops ... to Swartkops. Here. The last time. I was right!

[*Pause.*]



No, we ran! The *boer* had a gun. When he showed us the bullets Boesman dropped his tin and went down that road like a rabbit ...

*[Laughing ... her hands to her backside in an imitation of the scene.]*

*... Moenie skiet, baas!*

Me too, but the other way. Where did I find him ... looking at the mud, the hell-in because we lost all our things again. Just our clothes, and each other. Never lose that. Run your legs off the other way but at the end of it Boesman is waiting. How the hell does that happen?

Redhouse – Swartkops! I was right. He must laugh at himself.

*[Back to her chores.]*

And then? Somewhere else! *Ja*, of course. One of them. Veeplaas. Or Missionvale. Maybe Bethelsdorp. Lena knows them all.

*[Pause.]*

But which one ... that time?

*[She straightens up and looks around.]*

Which way ...?

*[Moving around, trying to orientate herself physically.]*

*[...]*

It's coming! Korsten! Empties, and the dog. *Hond!* How was it now? Redhouse – Swartkops – Veeplaas – Korsten. Then this morning the bulldozers ... and then ...

*[Pause.]* Here! I've got there!

*[She is very happy.]* 'Here', sister. You ran that last bit. Bundle and all.

*[...]*

Remember the times I used to sing for us? 'Da ... da ... da ...'

BOESMAN. What's the matter with you?

LENA. Feeling fine, darling. I'm warm. You know why? I've been running. You should have seen me! I'm not as old as I thought. All the way from Redhouse ...

*[The rest of her sentence is lost in laughter at the expression on his face.]*

... and now I'm here. With you.

Da ... da ... da ...

(100)





**QUESTION 3:**

**SOUTH AFRICAN SHORT FICTION**

**Es'kia Mphahlele, "Mrs Plum"**

Using the passage below as a starting point, discuss how the figure of a naïve yet perceptive narrator is used in Mphahlele's "Mrs Plum" to highlight the spoken and unspoken misunderstandings between Mrs Plum and Karabo.

In the first year Mrs Plum wanted me to eat at table with her. It was very hard, one because I was not used to eating at table with a fork and knife, two because I heard of no other kitchen worker who was handled like this. I was afraid. Afraid of everybody, of Madam's guests if they found me doing this. Madam said I must not be silly. I must show that African servants can also eat at table. Number three, I could not eat some of the things I loved very much: mealie-meal porridge with sour milk or *morogo*, stamped mealies mixed with butter beans, sour porridge for breakfast and other things. Also, except for morning porridge, our food is nice when you eat with the hand. So nice that it does not stop in the mouth or throat to greet anyone before it passes smoothly down.

(100)

**QUESTION 4:**

**PHASWANE MPE, *Welcome To Our Hillbrow***

In *Welcome To Our Hillbrow*, Mpe uses the neighbourhood of Hillbrow almost as if it is a character in the novel. Discuss what Hillbrow represents in the novel and comment on the literary devices that Mpe uses to convey his ideas about Hillbrow to the reader.

(100)

**END OF PAPER**

