



**Cambridge International Examinations**  
Cambridge Pre-U Certificate

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**PRINCIPAL COURSE RUSSIAN**

**9782/04**

Paper 4 Topics and Texts

**May/June 2016**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

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**Published**

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

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### Part I: Topics

Candidates are to attempt one question from Part I: Topics and will write their answers in the Target Language as these texts/films are to be studied primarily in cultural context (be it historical, political, social) as well as a literary/cinematic one.

Answers are to be marked out of 30 according to the criteria below:

- 20 for Content [AO3: 10 marks, AO4: 10 marks]
- 10 for Language [AO3]

This paper is intended to test candidates' knowledge and understanding of a topic and their ability to use this knowledge to answer questions in a clear and focused manner. A sophisticated literary approach is not expected (although at the highest levels it is sometimes seen), but great value is placed on evidence of a first-hand response and thoughtful, personal evaluation of what candidates have studied. Candidates may have been encouraged to depend closely on prepared notes and quotations: quotation for its own sake is not useful, though it will not be undervalued if used appropriately to illustrate a point in the answer. This applies to films as well as literary texts. Texts and notes may not be taken into the examination.

Candidates will not tend to show **all** the qualities or faults described in any one mark-band. Examiners will attempt to weigh up all these at every borderline, in order to see whether the work can be considered for the category above.

Examiners will take a positive and flexible approach and, even when there are obvious flaws in an answer, reward evidence of knowledge and especially any signs of understanding and careful organisation. In the marking of these questions, specific guidelines will be given for each question, agreed by the examination team.

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<b>Part I: Topics – Content</b>		
<b>18–20</b>	<i>Excellent</i>	Excellent ability to organise material in relation to the question. Comprehensive knowledge of both texts/films. Ability to look beyond the immediate material and to show good understanding of underlying themes.
<b>15–17</b>	<i>Very good</i>	A thoughtful and well argued response to the question. Thorough knowledge of both texts/films. Detailed understanding and illustration of thematic and comparative issues.
<b>12–14</b>	<i>Good</i>	A well argued response to the question. Equally sound knowledge of both texts/films. Good understanding and illustration of the thematic and comparative issues.
<b>9–11</b>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	A mainly relevant response to the question. Shows fair knowledge of texts/films. Some understanding and illustration of the thematic and comparative issues AND/OR good understanding of texts/films, but lacking detail. Stronger on one text/film than the other.
<b>5–8</b>	<i>Weak</i>	An uneven OR basic response to the question. Shows some knowledge and understanding of the texts/films. Includes some relevant points, but development and illustration are limited. Contains padding AND/OR has some obvious omissions OR is largely narrative.
<b>1–4</b>	<i>Poor</i>	Little attempt to answer the question. Poor knowledge and understanding of the texts/films. Insubstantial with very little relevance.
<b>0</b>		No rewardable content.

<b>Part I: Topics – Language</b>		
<b>10</b>	<i>Excellent</i>	Almost flawless. Excellent range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns. Good sense of idiom.
<b>8–9</b>	<i>Very good</i>	Highly accurate. Wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns. Some sense of idiom.
<b>6–7</b>	<i>Good</i>	Generally accurate. Good range of vocabulary and some complex sentence patterns.
<b>4–5</b>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	Predominantly simple patterns correctly used and/or some complex language attempted, but with variable success. Adequate range of vocabulary, but some repetition.
<b>2–3</b>	<i>Weak</i>	Persistent errors. Simple and repetitive sentence patterns. Limited vocabulary.
<b>1</b>	<i>Poor</i>	Little evidence of grammatical awareness. Very limited vocabulary.
<b>0</b>		No rewardable language.

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## Indicative Content

Questions are open to interpretation and, therefore, the following notes are not intended to be prescriptive but to give an indication of some of the points which could be made in response to each question. They are by no means exhaustive.

### 1 НА ДНЕ РУССКОГО И СОВЕТСКОГО ОБЩЕСТВО

- (a) **Сравните по одной сцене из каждого выбранного вами произведения, которые ясно показывают хаос, безнадёжность или трагичность жизни на дне общества.**

Candidates should compare two scenes, one from each of their chosen works, which clearly show the chaos, hopelessness or tragic nature of life at the bottom of society. Any two scenes showing one or several of the required elements will be acceptable. The elements do not have to be common to both scenes. The best candidates may consider, in addition to the content, the artistic methods used (dramatic, narrative, cinematographic techniques) and the degree to which these are effective.

- (b) **«На дне общества жизнь всегда трудна, неприятна, даже опасна». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением?**

Candidates should discuss whether or to what extent life at the bottom of society is always hard, unpleasant and even dangerous in the studied works. Candidates should describe how the characters interact with each other, their past history, if known, what happens to them during the course of the selected works and what their ultimate fate is. Though the depiction of the lives of the characters in these works is predominantly stark, there are, from time to time, happy and light moments in the lives of some, and the best answers will refer to these. Candidates might express an opinion as to whether or to what extent the creators of the selected works are exaggerating the characters' way of life and the conditions in which they live. Some general knowledge of the different social, temporal and historical contexts in which the works are set will be required. Answers may mention characters' personality traits, behavioural characteristics and how these negatively affect others. Among these are: a propensity for violence, domestic violence, intimidation and bullying, dysfunctional relationships, casual sex / sexual activity outside the perceived social norm, infidelity, unreliability, selfishness, opportunism, dishonesty (lying, stealing, cheating at cards), lack of foresight, a desire to live for the moment, a need to escape reality through use of alcohol, drunkenness.

When writing about *На дне*, candidates should describe the motley assortment of inhabitants of a provincial lodging-house for social derelicts in a run-down area near the Volga at the very beginning of the twentieth century. The play has little plot, but we learn much about the characters' backgrounds and the reasons why they have fallen so low and seem unable to better themselves significantly or at all. We observe the characters squabble and fight over trivial petty debts and stolen goods, who should do the cleaning. We see disputes about money and cheating at cards as well as more serious rivalry, involving sexual jealousy. We are shown a range of social types. Some may argue that the moments of hope in the plot relieve the awful nature of the characters' lives as do moments of happy drunkenness and the occasional tender moment (e.g. between Natasha and Pepel in Act 3) and that, therefore, life is not always unpleasant. Nevertheless, such moments are exceptional and rare. Some will argue that there are too many brutalised, dehumanised beings with sordid and tragic stories cruelly mistreating each other in squalid circumstances to be believable, though each individual portrait may well be credible in itself. Others will applaud Gorky's attempt to portray the gritty reality of life at the bottom of the heap in the historical and temporal context, however.

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*Калина красная* tells the story of 40 year old Egor Prokudin, a recidivist thief released from a corrective labour colony in the early 1970s. We follow the well-intentioned central character as he struggles to reintegrate into rural society. Intending to buy a cow and do agricultural work, Egor quotes poetry and admires nature as he travels to the town where his former gang are gathered, anxiously awaiting news of a successful robbery. The gang's members, who are drinking champagne, smoking and playing music, appear somewhat caricature-like. The young men are muscular, the women sexually attractive. Some of their names (e.g. the leader, Guboshlep, and Bul'dog) reflect physical features. Their language is colloquial and full of criminal slang. During the jolly drunken revelry, Lyus'en hugs, kisses and dances with Egor, eventually suggesting sex. The celebrations come to a sudden end when a phone-call brings the news that the robbers have been caught. Guboshlep orders the gang to disperse and offers Egor some money. At first he refuses, but then accepts, though his fellow prisoners had collected some money before his release. Egor helps the gang escape by leading the police away from the others. His release papers showing when he was released, will cover him. After unsuccessfully looking for former associates, Egor decides to travel to the village of Yasnoe to visit Lyubov' Fedorovna Baykalova, the woman with whom he has been corresponding while in prison. Lyuba's parents are frightened of their guest. Egor wins over her father by using clever psychology. From the events in the plot, candidates are likely to conclude that for Egor and the gang there are some occasional happy moments, chiefly involving hedonistic activities. When Egor is established as an agricultural worker and living with Lyuba, there are also many moments when it appears that life is pleasurable in a more spiritual sense, though danger is clearly never far away. In Egor, Shukshin paints a credible picture of a rounded human being, struggling to establish himself in a new way of life and showing success and failure at different points in the story.

In *Воп*, set in the last years of Stalin's rule, we are shown how the character, behaviour and morality of one dominant individual can have serious, long-term negative consequences for himself and those he encounters, in particular for 6-year old Sanya, whose father had died in WW2, 6 months before his birth. His mother takes up with a smart, handsome, soldier with whom she has a sexual encounter on a train, shortly after he has committed a robbery in a carriage. Tolyan, Katya and Sanya pass themselves off as a family, conning their way into communal accommodation and into the trust of their fellow residents. Sanya, who longs for a father figure and admires Tolyan's muscles and tattoos, is treated roughly by the man he looks up to, especially when he gets in the way of Tolyan and Katya making love. Katya soon learns that her lover is a selfish, violent brute, a calculating thief who feels no guilt in stealing from those who have accepted him into their community. There are happy moments in the couple's relationship, however. We see Katya snuggling up to Tolyan in the warm, sunny south by the Black Sea and the couple enjoying an expensive meal in a train's restaurant car, though Katya appears to be laughing hysterically. Soon after, we see that all is not well. We see her lying in bed in a state of depression, frightened by her situation and the behaviour of her son who has learned the art of deception from Tolyan. She wants Tolyan to stop giving him lessons in case the little boy becomes like him. She does not want him to end up in prison and her son to be put in an orphanage. However this happens after Tolyan is interned after a robbery and Katya dies from a botched abortion. Her son is placed in an orphanage where he treasures his memories along with his mother's watch and Tolyan's gun. He dreams that Tolyan will one day be free and come for him. Years later, Sanya encounters Tolyan who has degenerated further as a drunk and womaniser. Tolyan initially fails to recognise Sanya and has difficulty even remembering who Katya was. He wants nothing to do with his former protégé. Sanya feels Tolyan has betrayed him and his mother, follows him as he is getting onto a train at night and shoots him dead, thus liberating himself from feelings of hero worship and a desire to emulate his surrogate parent. References to the longer version of the film with additional scenes set at a later date will be accepted, if relevant and justified. Candidates will likely argue that though the lives of Tolyan, Katya and the younger Sanya are clearly hard, sometimes unpleasant and often dangerous, there are also a number of lighter and more pleasurable moments. Sanya sometimes has the father figure he desires for he shows him how to stand up against bullies, how to wash in a banya

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and bluff his way out of many difficult situations such as by throwing salt in the eyes of an attacker. Katya has a protector and lover and the whole 'family' experience on occasions a life-style better than they could have expected had they been living an honest life. The film also shows the main characters participating in a range of communal fun activities (eating, drinking and singing at parties with neighbours, at the circus, cinema, an open-air concert), even if not all the characters are enjoying these events to the same extent (Katya's jealousy or suspicions about Tolyan and other women, Tolyan's planning burglaries). Candidates are likely to suggest that the film provides a rare insight into the world of the small-time crook operating among ordinary people at a time when petty criminality, being ideologically unacceptable, was barely mentioned.

## 2 РЕВОЛЮЦИЯ И ГРАЖДАНСКАЯ ВОЙНА

- (a) Выберите по одному персонажу из каждого выбранного вами произведения и сравните, как они справляются с тяжёлой ситуацией или опасным событием.

Candidates should compare how one important character from each of the chosen works copes with a difficult situation or dangerous event. Any characters will be acceptable provided their importance in the selected works can be justified. The best candidates will provided an evaluation of the degree to which the chosen character successfully copes or fails to do so.

*Белая гвардия* follows the activities of the comfortably-off, intellectual Tsarist Turbin family caught up in the turbulent events which befell Kiev between May 1918 and February 1919. In particular, the novel focuses on two brothers (Aleksey, a doctor, and 17 year old Nikolka) and their sister, Elena, abandoned by her Baltic German husband, Tal'berg who has to flee for having publically criticised Petlyura. Aleksey and his friend, Myshlaevsky, join Karas in his Mortar Regiment, while Nikolka serves as an Infantry Cadet. We are shown the men in a variety of difficult and dangerous situations as they try to defend their city from the encroaching forces of the Social-Democrat, Petlyura. Eventually, Aleksey is shot and wounded, but manages to return to his home, aided by the woman who had first tended to his wounds. Here his sister nurses him to a miraculous recovery from typhus. Though there is an unexpected happy-ending for the main character, the text explicitly reveals the horrors of war and the mental and physical suffering of those participating in the confused struggles of the various competing military and political factions (monarchist, nationalist, Bolshevik, German allies etc.). Among those aspects of often gritty realism which could be mentioned are: frost-bite, lice and cold suffered by Myshlaevsky and others, lack of equipment and proper clothing, inadequate training (e.g. the Mortar Regiment), inept commanders who abandon their troops, black marketeers, food shortages, wild rumours concerning the fate of the Tsar and the identity of Petlyura, people changing sides, violent anti-Semitism, fear of spies and violence against them, disloyalty and betrayal (the withdrawal of the Germans, themselves horrified at the fate of their Kaiser), the cowardly flight of the Hetman and reactions to this, fear of foreign invasion, elation of victories and despair in defeat, violent death (e.g. the decapitation of Fel'dman, the army contractor), the gore of the mortuary (sight and smell) where the body of Nay-Turs has been kept, theft of property by errant soldiers (e.g. from Vasilisa) et al. Bulgakov gives us insight chiefly into the thought processes of the Turbins and their friends on the same side as they deal with the grim reality of the conflict. However, we are also made to realise that the enemy shares the same emotions and instincts as the Whites, as we are given limited insight into some enemy characters (e.g. Colonel Kozyr'-Leshko).

*Разгром* is set in the summer and autumn of 1919. A detachment of Bolshevik partisans fighting in the Far East is forced to retreat in the face of superior forces. Though they are initially successful in extricating themselves from a virtually impassable swamp, they fall victim to a Cossack ambush as a result of which only 19 of them survive. Living conditions

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for the partisans are primitive. These are not depicted through rose-tinted glasses, and the reality of death in wartime is never concealed. It is shown to affect many of the major and minor characters to whom the reader becomes sympathetic: Frolov is given a fatal dose of 'bromide' because his condition is considered hopeless; Metelitsa is shot in captivity by his Cossack guard; Stashinsky, the doctor, is shot and dragged behind his horse; Morozka, trying to warn his comrades about the ambush, fires 3 warning shots when surprised by some Cossacks who promptly finish him off. If anything is idealised in the novel, it is the portrayal of characters according to Socialist Realist principles, although the term was not officially coined till 1932, some 5 years after the text was written. Fadeev presents to us a variety of types whose intrinsic nature, motivation and behaviour are meant to reflect the reality of Socialist society, predominantly in a positive manner. This does not mean that 'negative' character traits are absent from minor characters, and they are even present in some of the major ones whom we are meant to consider positive. Hard drinking and womanising are pretty much omnipresent among the partisans. Varya, though married to Morozka, is generous with her sexual favours, and even Levinson, the model leader, is depicted around a campfire telling bawdy stories with his men. The faults of the proletarian heroes are excused, however, because of their overriding Socialist virtues – their willingness to risk their all for the good of society, their altruism and sense of duty and responsibility. Examples of this include: Morozka's rescuing of Mechik under fire, his suicidal warning shots to his comrades in the end; Levinson's apparently calm and considered leadership, even when he really has little idea what is best to do next, his determination to go on no matter what happens, even when he himself is ill and in pain, his need to go on living and do his duty; the troops fighting the enemy who, according to Levinson, are motivated not only by a desire for self-preservation, but by some higher instinct for which they would suffer anything, even death. Such superior proletarian attitudes are contrasted with those of Mechik, the petty bourgeois who feels out of place among his rough, uneducated comrades and quickly longs to return to his former comfortable life in the town. Never accepted because of his social origins and Maximalist connections, he acquires the reputation of an arrogant idler, failing to care for his horse and generally pull his weight. His desertion to save his own life at the end of the novel epitomises his selfishness and individualism.

*Адмираль* deals with the rise and fall of Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak from 1916 until his execution in 1920. Made in 2008, its aim was not only to chronicle the period but to help to rehabilitate an anti-Bolshevik and present him as a true hero of Russia, regardless of his political beliefs. The film contains, for some, an excessively romantic portrayal of his adulterous affair with Anna Timireva, the wife of a fellow officer and friend as well as some historical inaccuracies (e.g. the Friedrich Carl was, in fact, sunk by mines in November 1914 rather than November 1916, and most of the crew were rescued). Nevertheless, there are many scenes which accurately depict the violence, blood, guts, noise, confusion and general horror of war on land and sea. The naval battles in the Baltic in 1916 are particularly graphic as is the scene which shows the disarming and execution by rifle and bayonet of terrified officers at Kronstadt following the February Revolution in 1917. The non-violent disarming of Kolchak and his officers in Sevastopol due to the compliance of the respected now Vice-Admiral is shown in contrast. Kerensky summons Kolchak to Petrograd with the offer of being appointed Minister of Defence, but Kolchak criticises Kerensky for allowing indiscipline to flourish in the armed services. Angered by the Vice-Admiral's desire to impose strict order once again, Kerensky exiles him to the USA, calling him a counter-revolutionary. After the October Revolution, Kolchak is seen to have returned. He is leading part of the White Army at Omsk. His former friend, Timirev, has changed sides and is now a Red Commissar on his way with his wife to the Far East. On hearing the news about the whereabouts of Kolchak, Anna leaves her husband to follow her lover. She arrives at the Eastern Front in November 1918 in time to see Kolchak sworn in as Supreme Ruler of Russia in a highly romanticised scene complete with triumphant music, religious trappings and many subordinates on their knees to show their loyalty. Anna becomes a nurse and works tirelessly to save lives amid the gore of the battles. With the arrival of General Janin, disagreements about the function and duties of various interventionist forces begin to emerge. Kolchak is depicted as a wise

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and beloved leader, though just as he is seen accepting presents for saving Omsk, news comes of Red victories. The city must be evacuated, and the capital moved to Irkutsk. As the trains are loaded, Kolchak and Anna are reunited. He will never leave her again. Kolchak tells Anna that he has asked his wife for a divorce. Though at first reluctant, Anna eventually consents to marriage. From this point, Kolchak appears more caught up in his personal happiness than in dealing with the reality of his army's collapsing forces. General Kappel is simply ordered to Irkutsk to put down a rebellion as the Czechs begin to move out their equipment, having declared neutrality. Kappel's army is lacking in supplies and ammunition, and this results in the needless slaughter of its soldiers in a gruesome battle sequence. Janin agrees to hand over Kolchak to the Reds as this will secure the interventionists' safe passage out of the country. Kolchak still appears to be in a world of his own with Anna as they approach Irkutsk. Many of the White officers have already abandoned him before his arrest, trial and execution. In captivity, Kolchak is brave and stoical, sustained by his love for Anna who, we learn, subsequently spent thirty years in the Gulag.

- (b) «Роль женщин в Революции и Гражданской войне была маленькой и незначительной». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением?

Candidates should display some background knowledge to support or disprove the assertion that the role of women in the Revolution and Civil War was small and insignificant. They should then examine the roles of female characters in the chosen works in order to assess whether or to what extent the actions and attitudes of the female characters correspond to those of real women at the time in which the works are set. The Revolutions of 1917 saw the establishment of many rights for women (e.g. the right to vote, equality in the Civil Service and in terms of property and family law). After the Bolshevik Revolution, women joined the army in record numbers so that by 1920 they made up about 2% of the total. The Revolutions saw women taking on important roles outside the home as never before, particularly as political activists and leaders. Though a few women, such as Aleksandra Kollontay or Nadezhda Krupskaya played really significant roles in Soviet society, most women played supportive ones to men, while peasant women generally struggled to embrace an emancipated way of thinking. When discussing *Белая гвардия*, candidates need to bear in mind that Bulgakov's sympathies lie with the socially conservative Whites. Nevertheless, in the characters of Yuliya Aleksandrovna Reyss who saves, hides and attends to the wounded Aleksey, and Elena, his sister, who subsequently nurses him to a miraculous recovery from typhus, despite her negative feelings at being abandoned by her husband, we are presented with examples of strong, courageous women, able to fulfil roles as important as many men. When discussing *Разгром*, candidates will focus on the character of Varya, a nurse at a Red Army field hospital in the Far East. Varya not only bravely tends the wounded, but puts up with the same privations and dangers of military life as the male partisans around her. In addition, she is sexually liberated and accommodating. Though officially married to Morozka, she falls in love with the younger and more sensitive Mechik while also submitting to the sexual demands of others. When discussing *Адмиралъ*, candidates can assess the character of Anna Vasil'evna Timireva who not only provides inspiration, love and comfort to Kolchak through good and bad times, but also sets a positive example to others by serving as a nurse from her arrival in Omsk in 1918 and by clearly not being frightened of the gore of battle. Mention might also be made of the battle-scene near Irkutsk where Kappel's army, lacking bullets, is slaughtered. After a number of men have been machine-gunned, a nurse bravely leads a charge, but is quickly cut down. The shooting of a woman angers her male combatants, who then charge fiercely, but to no avail as they are outclassed by the equipment of their enemy.



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### 3 СОВЕТСКИЕ ГРАЖДАНЕ В ВОЕННОЕ И МИРНОЕ ВРЕМЯ

- (a) Сравните по одной сцене из каждого выбранного вами произведения, которые ясно показывают мужество, трусость или страх.

Candidates should compare two scenes (one from each of their chosen works) which depict courage, cowardice or fear on the part of the characters. It is possible that more than one of these emotional states is demonstrated in a particular scene. The best candidates will not merely describe the action, but will evaluate the credibility of the behaviour depicted in the physical and historical contexts of the works. Narrative and cinematographic techniques may also be discussed.

- (b) «Даже те, кто оказывались далеко от фронта, часто становились жертвами той ужасной войны». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением?

Candidates should first describe the personal circumstances and the material, physical and mental conditions of civilians and former soldiers affected directly or indirectly by war. They should then discuss whether or to what extent the individuals can be called victims of war, bearing in mind that part or all of a character's condition might be attributed to another factor.

When writing about *Река Потудань*, candidates will discuss the effects of war on Nikita Firsov who is returning home after serving for 3-4 years as a Red Army private in the Civil War. He, like his comrades, has grown wiser, and has learned to endure as a result of his experiences, yet Nikita's reaction to civilian life indicates that he has been seriously emotionally and psychologically damaged. From the way Nikita suffers with terrible dreams, his reticence to show physical affection for Lyuba and his breakdown, candidates are likely to conclude that Nikita has been affected by war, though some may argue that his psychological problems lie in his relationship with his parents. Nikita seems to be looking for a mother-substitute rather than for a wife in Lyuba, and often appears to feel inadequate in front of his father who frequently completes tasks for him. The apparently happy-ending is only a temporary situation, and further problems are likely to lie ahead for the young man whom we must pity rather than admire. For a typical Soviet reader schooled in Socialist Realist interpretation, however, the ending is positive and optimistic: Nikita has conquered his fears, dealt with his sexual inadequacy and, apart from running away, has behaved throughout in a kind, considerate and gentle manner to his wife. He therefore does not require our pity and is clearly worthy of praise.

When writing about *Летят журавли*, candidates will probably concentrate on the character of Veronika. The young woman is devastated when war is declared and her boyfriend, Boris Borozdin, and his friend, Stepan, volunteer for the army, though Boris is very obviously in love with Veronika and could well have been given an exemption from call-up. Before leaving, Boris leaves with his grandmother a toy squirrel for his girlfriend. In it is concealed a loving note of farewell which is not found till much later. Before going off to enlist, without having said goodbye in person to Veronika, Boris tells his cousin, Mark, to stay with the family. One day, Veronika's parents are killed in an air raid after which Boris's father invites her to move in with them. He tells Mark to look after her to stop her brooding, and Mark promises his uncle to do what he can. Mark, a concert pianist, is seen playing the piano and complaining that were it not for the war, he would be playing in the Tchaikovsky Hall. In this sense, he might be considered a victim of war. During an air raid, Mark rapes her. A short scene shows a miserable Veronika telling her family that she and Mark are to get married. Mark and Veronika are evacuated to Siberia where Boris's father is Chief of the Army Hospital. Boris's note to Veronika is finally discovered, which has ramifications for Mark, Antonia and Veronika. Mark's exemption from military service is queried by the doctor, Veronika says she is leaving him and Mark is last shown in the film saying he has wanted to

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go to war for ages and leaves. Though a soldier comes with news of Boris's death while carrying out reconnaissance activities, Veronika does not give up hope until at a victory parade in Moscow she finally sees Stepan who hands her the photo Boris gave him to look after before setting out on his last mission. Veronika can therefore be regarded as a victim of war. Apparently deserted by her boyfriend who ultimately is killed in action, she is raped, then trapped in a loveless marriage to a morally reprehensible and manipulative man. Soviet viewers would both pity and admire her, for despite everything, she is able to contribute to the war effort by working as a nurse, show compassion for patients and the little boy she saves, and in the end accept the loss of Boris and move on.

*Баллада о солдате* centres around 19 year old signalman Alesha Skvortsov whom we first see on the battlefield as he disables two tanks to his obvious surprise. Alesha is modest, honest and admits to being scared when his general, calling him a hero, asks for details of what has happened. When the general tells Alesha he is putting him up for an award, the young soldier asks to be allowed to go home instead as he did not have time to say a proper goodbye to his mother and could also fix the roof at the same time. Alesha is delighted when he is given 6 days' leave, but a combination of circumstances, brought about by war-time conditions and his intrinsic good nature, conspire to limit his visit home to a matter of minutes, making the young soldier a victim of war, even when he is far from the immediate danger of the front. Alesha's adventures on his way home also allow us to observe a variety of secondary characters and to observe how war has affected their circumstances and personalities. As Alesha leaves the war zone, a soldier (Pavlov) asks him to take a present of soap and a message to his wife. At one station, Alesha helps a one-legged man with his luggage. The disabled soldier goes to send a telegram to his wife, and because Alesha has to go looking for him when their train comes in, they both miss it. Later, at the disabled soldier's stop, Alesha keeps the man company until his wife, whom he fears will now reject him, turns up to collect him, after all. Alesha now has to bribe a guard to hitch a ride on a military goods-train full of hay. Having fallen asleep, he wakes to the sight of a girl who has just got on. When she notices him, she is frightened he will rape her and tries to jump off, but Alesha restrains her, saving her from hurting herself. Gradually during the journey, Shura comes to trust him. When Shura tells him she is thirsty, Alesha leaves the train at a station to find water. He returns to find the guard trying to get Shura, a civilian, to leave the train. Alesha objects, and there is a brief fight, though he resolves the matter by offering the guard more tins of meat. When, however, the lieutenant arrives and spots the tins, the guard is punished with 5 days' detention. When Alesha again leaves the train for water, this time he does not return soon enough and has to hitch a lift. Reunited with Shura, they set off to deliver the soap, but find the building where Pavlov lives a smoking ruin. They are then directed to where the soldier's wife is now living, apparently with another man. Disgusted, Alesha does not linger. Having left, he returns to retrieve the soap which he then takes to Pavlov's father. The old man can be seen as a victim of war in that he is clearly distressed that his son's marriage has been destroyed because of his son's forced absence. Though Pavlov can be seen as a victim, this may or may not be true of his wife, Elizaveta, however. Alesha and Shura resume their journey. At the next stop, Shura reaches her destination. Both appear sad at being separated as Alesha continues on his journey to Sosnovka. War has brought them together, but, in necessitating their separation, may also bring an end to their incipient relationship. Alesha's train is hit by shells, and the young man helps to rescue passengers, already victims of war, from the burning vehicle. As he is not eligible for the next train, he takes a raft to reach a road where he eventually hitches a lift to his village. His reunion is further delayed as his mother is far off in the fields and takes a while to get home. Their brief meeting and embrace are very poignant. Close-up shots, pained expressions and tears from the mother, together with a silent backing track, reinforce the emotional atmosphere. Candidates are likely to agree that the image of the suffering mother at the start and end of the film emphasises the war-time sufferings and trauma of those far from the front. Soviet viewers, while sympathising with the old woman's plight, would also be expected to realise that her personal loss had to be sublimated to the interests of the greater good.

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#### 4 СОВЕТСКИЙ БЫТ ПРИ ХРУЩЁВЕ И БРЕЖНЕВЕ

**(а) Какими аспектами советского общества интересуются создатели выбранных вами произведений?**

Candidates should describe which aspects of Soviet society interest the creators of their chosen works. All three works deal to a greater or lesser extent with the role and position of women in society and the nature of the relationships between men and women, while *Обмен* is equally concerned with changing value-systems. As well as discussing the main themes, candidates may allude in general terms to the improving living conditions in town and country, the influence of technology in people's lives, social problems (alcoholism, domestic violence, loneliness, the demographic crisis) attitudes to sex, marriage, abortion, divorce, bribery and corruption, the housing crisis etc.

The narrator of *Неделя как неделя* is 26 year old Ol'ga Voronkova, a junior research scientist in 1960s Moscow. Married to the loving, but slightly lazy, Dima, the young woman struggles with the double burden of doing an intellectually demanding job and performing the role of housewife and mother to two very young children. Over the typical week described in her diary, Ol'ga is frequently exhausted, occasionally tearful and often hassled by menial domestic concerns, her children's tantrums and apparently meaningless political duties which have no direct bearing on her work in a laboratory with inadequate facilities and looming deadlines. However, when contrasted with the lives of her female colleagues, Ol'ga's life is good. Her husband is faithful, loving, and supportive, they inhabit a comfortable modern flat in a new district, and for all its ups and downs, the family unit functions well. Candidates are likely to conclude that although Dima has an obvious lazy streak or a greater acceptance of child-instigated household disorder, he is as near to a model Soviet husband as one could imagine. Though the lion's share of domestic tasks falls on Baranskaya's heroine, Dima is prepared to help with some of the childcare and minor domestic tasks and is always ready to step in when it is clear that his wife cannot cope. Candidates should point out that it was the general expectation of Soviet society that women worked both inside and outside the home, whereas men were not really expected to do very much to help after a day's work. Dima further grows in stature when compared with the partners of Ol'ga's colleagues, for he is sober, never violent and, though there are sometimes quarrels, these are never really damaging to the couple's relationship or happiness. Dima is at first in favour of his wife having an abortion when the couple, with one child already, find themselves struggling to make ends meet, but once Ol'ga has decided she wants to have the baby, he quickly accepts her point of view and assumes his responsibilities in a positive manner. On the other hand, Shura's husband drinks, Lyusya Markoyan's husband has been nagging her for five years to stop work to care for her child and have yet another and the partner of Blonde Lyusya had returned to his original family on hearing his girlfriend was pregnant. Baranskaya would appear to be saying that Soviet marriage can be a positive experience for both men and women, though for many it contains much that is unfair to women. Likewise, Ol'ga's gentle questioning of the failures and weaknesses of the system in her diary and her more robust comments at the political meeting at work indicate the author's opinion that though there is much to praise in Soviet society, there is still considerable room for improvement. In presenting us with a model Soviet woman in the shape of the elderly idealist, Mar'ya Matveevna, whose value-system the younger women all admire, but little understand, Baranskaya is further emphasising the fact that Soviet society has moved on in a less idealistic and more humane direction.

When writing about *Обмен*, candidates will probably mainly focus on the relationship between Dmitriev and Lena, showing how this extremely strong woman comes to dominate her husband, gradually pushing out of him the values of the intellectual, Socialist, idealist Dmitrievs and replacing them with those of the materialistic, insensitive and philistine Lukyanovs. Though Lena is an intelligent woman, a translator of English with a prestigious

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job, she has demonstrated during her 14 years of marriage to Dmitriev that she lacks all scruples. She is a natural survivor with the necessary determination to succeed in a fundamentally corrupt society where the ability to use contacts to obtain goods, services and favours is vital. Described as a bulldog gripping her wishes firmly between her teeth until they have become a reality, Lena uses her skills to obtain a good job in an institute near the best shops, get a place for her daughter in a prestigious specialist language school, make her husband appropriate his friend's job and use her terminally-ill mother-in-law, whom she dislikes, as a tool to acquire a much-needed larger flat. By legally moving the old lady in, the young couple will inherit her living space on her death. Always ready to monopolise and manipulate weaker, more sensitive and morally upright individuals, Lena is depicted as a corrupting influence on her husband whom she pushes to the point of moral bankruptcy. Sexually enslaved by Lena, he is gradually infected by her materialism, insensitivity and determination to feather her own nest at the expense of others. Candidates will probably conclude that the author is highly critical of Lena's values as these are constantly being contrasted with those of past and present members of the Dmitriev family. Yet, however desirable traditional Socialist values may be, they appear to be no longer adequate for sustaining a good life in Brezhnev's Russia.

Men'shov's film shows the differing fortunes of Tonya, Lyuda and Katya, three provincial girls living together in a women's residence in Moscow. Katya takes the opportunity to house-sit for a relative, a professor with a sumptuous flat where she and Lyuda, posing as the professor's daughters, entertain a range of intellectual men. Lyuda is attracted to Gurin, a famous ice-hockey player while Katya falls for Rudol'f, a cameraman who believes that TV will become the most important art form and change the world. After meeting Rudol'f's pretentious mother and being filmed on TV, Katya reluctantly has sex, as a result of which she becomes pregnant, a fact revealed at the wedding of Tonya to the solid Kolya. When Rudol'f discovers Katya is a mere factory worker, he abandons her, blaming her for her pregnancy and saying she had deceived him. His mother offers Katya money to keep away, but this she firmly refuses: she can earn her own living. Twenty years later, Katya is shown waking up in a nice flat where her daughter, Aleksandra, lives with her. She is now the director of a large factory where she is firmly in charge of a range of male subordinates. Lyuda, lonely and searching for a partner, has been divorced from Gurin for seven years. He has become an alcoholic and still bothers her for money to feed his habit. Tonya is still happily married to Kolya with whom she has several children. Katya is having an affair with Volodya, a married man, but is really still searching for the right man to come along. One day, as she is returning from Tonya's dacha, she meets Gosha, whose dirty shoes lead to a conversation and a new relationship. Katya is impressed by the tributes made to him by his friends at a picnic, his willingness to cook and his general demeanour, though she ignores his traditional views: men should always earn more than women and a marriage cannot work if the woman is in a position of superiority. When Rudol'f turns up to film an interview with Katya at the factory, neither at first recognises the other. When they do become aware of their identities, both remain cool during the filming. Later Rudol'f pesters Katya into meeting her. He is twice divorced, has no children and wants to see his daughter. Katya tells him it is too late for him to help bring up their child. His leaving had made her stronger. He should not contact her again. Meanwhile, Gosha helps Aleksandra's boyfriend to chase off a group of young men led by her jealous ex. Katya thanks Gosha, but says he should not have done it: Words are better than fists. In future he should respect her wishes when it comes to her daughter. Gosha informs her that if ever she uses that tone of voice to him again, he will never again set foot in the house. From now on *he* will make the decisions, for he is the man. As Katya apologises, Rudol'f arrives to see his daughter. He praises Katya's interview and tells her that they want to make a documentary about her rise from worker to director. Gosha is shocked and decides to leave. Katya is distraught, but now tells Aleksandra who Rudol'f really is. A week later, Kolya tracks down Gosha in a communal flat. He is drinking. After a drunken discussion, Kolya brings Gosha back to a dejected and submissive Katya. Candidates can comment on the apparent anti-feminist message that though women may well get on in their careers, traditional roles must be assumed in the home. Men and women

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must know their place, and happiness can only be achieved with the man in charge. Women can be single, strong and successful, but this state is no match for the stable nuclear family, led by a father figure.

- (b) «При Хрущёве и Брежнев материализм заменял идеализм среди советского народа». Изучив выбранные вами произведения, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением?**

Candidates should discuss in relation to their chosen works whether or to what extent materialism was replacing idealism among the Soviet people during the time of Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Answers should discuss the nature and depiction of the material conditions of the characters, the significance of any changes which occur over a period of time, the attitude of various characters to their living and working conditions and the means used by characters to improve their circumstances. Candidates should examine whether or to what extent idealism about Socialism and the construction of a collective Soviet society has been abandoned and replaced by materialism and an emphasis on personal gain and advancement by individual characters. Candidates might express an opinion as to whether or to what extent the creators of the works studied appear critical of the morals and ethics of their characters by considering which characters are depicted sympathetically and which unsympathetically, the apparent message of the work as a whole and of the conclusion in particular, the nature and attitude of the narrators of the texts and the use of certain cinematographic techniques (close-ups, linkage of shots with music, sounds or silence etc.) to emphasise the reactions of characters, the significance of an event or the importance of incidental detail in relation to a character or the message.

## 5 АСПЕКТЫ ПОСТСОВЕТСКОГО ОБЩЕСТВА

- (a) Выберите по одному персонажу из каждого выбранного вами произведения и сравните, как они справляются с трудной проблемой, стрессовой ситуацией или кризисом в жизни.**

From each of their chosen works, candidates should select a character and compare how each deals with a serious problem, stressful situation or crisis in their lives. The best candidates will take into account the age, educational background, training and life experience of the selected characters and the relative seriousness of the problem, situation or crisis for the individuals concerned. The use of particular cinematographic techniques (e.g. close-up shots, musical references) to further the sympathetic or unsympathetic treatment of a character by the director might also be considered.

- (b) «В постсоветском обществе всё ещё остаётся много значительных проблем». Изучив выбранные вами фильмы, вы согласны / не согласны с этим мнением?**

Candidates should discuss with detailed reference to their chosen films whether or to what extent there are still many significant problems remaining in post-Soviet society. Candidates are likely to agree that there are. All should describe and analyse the featured problems while the best may provide an opinion as to whether or to what extent the directors think that they can be solved by considering whether the endings have positive or negative outcomes for the main character(s). Some general knowledge of relevant problems in post-Soviet society will be required.

Vodrov's *Кавказский пленник* is a critique of Russia's imperial legacy, focussing on the relationship between the rulers and the ruled, the majority Russian, nominally Christian population, and ethnic and religious (here Muslim) minorities inhabiting the fringes of the

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Russian Federation. It depicts a society in the Caucasus striving to gain independence, to establish itself as an equal entity rather than a subjugated area under alien domination and occupation. The film highlights the differences in social and cultural values existing within the one state and exemplifies the continuing tensions between nationalities. It also depicts the problem of divided political and ideological loyalties within individual families, the problems which children, particularly Muslim girls, encounter when trying to assert themselves in the face of parental opposition and the difficulties encountered when love arises between men and women whose communities are at war. It also exposes the harsh effects of conscription on the soldier and his family, the bad conditions in the Russian army, especially in dangerous and hostile areas, the conflict for the soldier between his personal wishes and feelings and his duty to the state, the difficulties soldiers face when in captivity as well as corruption among those serving in the military and police. From the events that unfold while the two soldiers are held captive in the village, candidates are likely to argue that Bodrov is suggesting that the cycle of senseless killing should stop, but it continues regardless of the wishes of the individual. By showing us how acts of kindness can change attitudes to enemies, he is suggesting that reconciliation is possible at the level of the individual and that this should be encouraged, despite the ideology of opposing sides and the revenge tradition of both Russians and Caucasians.

In *Итальянцы*, Kravchuk highlights a number of issues related to the situation of orphan and homeless children in Russia today: the conditions in children's homes, problems surrounding adoption, especially transnational adoption, for individual children and others, corruption among officials, child abuse in various forms. In addition, the general state of provincial society and its problems, such as poverty, alcoholism, prostitution, violence, domestic violence and general criminality, all feature. The orphanage is run by the elderly Semen Alekseevich, more inadequate than cruel, but the real power is the business-like Zhanna Arkadievna, known as Madame. The pair appear well intentioned towards the children in their care, but are making a good living through arranging adoptions with rich foreigners. The home is spartan and overcrowded, though it technically fulfils basic requirements. From its basement, a gang of opportunist teenagers, led by Kolyan Nikolaev, run a criminal business, using the younger children to wash car windows, beg and steal as well as hand over gifts brought to them by foreign visitors. Some of the older girls are involved in prostitution. Kolyan, whose cruel mother had rejected him at a young age, uses violence to ensure that those who work for him hand over everything that comes their way, though some of it is given out for necessary purchases or rewards. When Vanya runs away to try to find his birthplace, the orphanage owners are primarily concerned with the risk of losing the money they have already received from his prospective foreign adopters, and a protracted chase ensues, including bribing the authorities to help them to find him. Eventually rescued by two women, Vanya runs to his destination. The man on duty invites him in, asking him for his story. When Vanya produces the document from the home showing where he came from, the kind man gives him food, telling him he is one of theirs. The man laments the current situation regarding unwanted and orphan children: They are selling kids for cash. The country is going downhill. They have 20 new babies whose mothers are refusing to be mothers. A woman came to look for her son. What was she thinking of before? Having searched the records, the man finds the address of Vanya's mother, Vera Solntseva. After another struggle, Vanya is seen approaching his mother's flat. When a voice asks him if he is wanting her, a smile breaks out on his face. In a voiceover, we hear Vanya send greetings from him and his mother to Anton who is now living with Claudia and Roberto in Italy. Kravchuk appears to be highly critical of many aspects of contemporary Russian society, though he shows that society can also offer hope for the individual and that not all people are nasty or selfish since many characters, albeit mainly minor ones, are kind or helpful to Vanya. However, though there is a happy ending for Vanya and Anton, there is no indication that the corrupt individuals depicted are punished or that the conditions in children's homes or in society in general are being improved.

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*Le Concert* illustrates a number of problems of post-Soviet society. It mainly deals with the legacy of communism as it affects individuals striving to recover from persecution, injustice and personal suffering brought about through conflict with the former regime and its ideology. It also shows ordinary people trying to adapt to new ways of living in a more complex capitalist world, including those who were servants of and/or believers in the Soviet system. We see how former Bolshoi musicians have fallen to menial jobs. Filipov, a former world-famous conductor, had been removed from his post during Brezhnev's era for supporting Jewish musicians, and now works as a cleaner in the office of the Director of the Bolshoi. The plan Filipov hatches, with other former musicians, leads to a grand fraud to send a false Bolshoi made up of formerly removed musicians to perform in France. Gavrillov, the KGB officer who had carried out the purge of the orchestra in Brezhnev's time, joins in as orchestra manager in order to gain access to the French communist party - he still appears to believe in the idea of building a better world through communism, though he is not above paying for individuals to pose as supporters at his Sunday public meetings. The French soloist engaged by the orchestra is the daughter of two of Filipov's former orchestra members, Jews who were sent to Siberia and subsequently died. The soloist is unaware of her origins, but bit by bit the truth about her past begins to emerge. After a farcical rehearsal period in which the orchestra members disappear to do odd jobs and do not rehearse, the concerto is a triumph, the orchestra having been uplifted by the brilliance of the soloist's playing. So great is their success that a new Andrey Filipov Orchestra is able to undertake a world tour with Anne-Marie, who now knows the truth about her parents, as soloist. Given the happy ending, candidates are likely to argue that Mihaileanu is positive about the new Russian society and that some, at least, of its problems can be solved. We see several characters who had suffered under the old regime, re-establishing their careers, albeit with difficulty. Filipov and Gavrillov make amends for their perceived and actual misdemeanours. Thus, there is some degree of reconciliation in 2009 between the oppressors and oppressed of old. Many types of Russians are seen to be able to survive and prosper in the new capitalist world. However, we are shown that there is still too much corruption in society, that there are big differences in wealth and power, and that oligarchs, usually lacking good taste, cultural values, manners and integrity, play an all too significant role.

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## Part II: Texts

Candidates are to attempt **one** question from Part II: Texts and will write their answers in English as these texts are to be studied primarily from a literary point of view.

Answers are to be marked out of 30 according to the criteria below:

- 25 for content [AO3: 10 marks, AO4: 15 marks]
- 5 for structure [AO3]

Examiners will look for a candidate's ability to engage with literary texts and to produce answers which show knowledge, understanding and close analysis of the text. A more sophisticated literary approach is expected than for answers to Part I. Great value is placed on detailed knowledge and understanding of the text; on the construction of an argument which engages the terms of the question and on a close and sophisticated analysis of sections of the text pertinent to the terms of the question. Candidates may have been encouraged to depend closely on prepared notes and quotation: quotation for its own sake is not useful, although it will gain credit if used appropriately to illustrate a point in the answer. Texts and notes may not be taken into the examination.

Candidates will not tend to show **all** the qualities or faults described in any one mark-band. Examiners will attempt to weigh all these up at every borderline, in order to see whether the work can be considered in the category above.

Examiners will take a positive and flexible approach and, even when there are obvious flaws in an answer, reward evidence of knowledge and understanding and especially any signs of analysis and organisation.

In the marking of these questions specific guidelines will be given for each essay, agreed by the examination team.



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Part II: Texts – Content		
23–25	<i>Excellent</i>	Excellent ability to organise material in relation to the question. Comprehensive response with an extensive number of relevant points targeting the terms of the question with precision. Displays detailed knowledge and sustained analysis.
19–22	<i>Very good</i>	A thoughtful and well argued response to the question. Includes a large number of relevant points, well illustrated. Displays thorough knowledge, good understanding and analysis of the text.
15–18	<i>Good</i>	A well argued response to the question. Includes a good number of relevant points, most of which are developed and illustrated. Some limitations of insight, but a coherent approach.
11–14	<i>Satisfactory</i>	A mainly relevant response to the question. Shows fair knowledge and understanding of the text. Includes a fair number of relevant points not always linked and/or developed.
6–10	<i>Weak</i>	An uneven OR basic response to the question. Shows some knowledge and understanding of the text. Includes some relevant points, but development and illustration are limited. Contains padding AND/OR has some obvious omissions OR is largely narrative.
1–5	<i>Poor</i>	Little attempt to answer the question. Only elementary knowledge and understanding of the text. Makes very few relevant points and even these are largely undeveloped and unsubstantiated. OR a response which makes hardly any attempt to address the terms of the question but which displays a basic general knowledge of the text.
0		No rewardable content.

Part II: Texts – Structure		
5	<i>Very Good</i>	A well structured and coherent piece of writing, with ideas and arguments clearly linked throughout. All paragraphs well constructed. Includes a comprehensive introduction and conclusion.
4	<i>Good</i>	A clear structure, with logical presentation of ideas. Most paragraphs well constructed. Includes an adequate introduction and conclusion.
3	<i>Satisfactory</i>	Some success in organising material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. A reasonable attempt to paragraph but weakness in introduction and conclusion.
2	<i>Weak</i>	Some attempt to organise material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. Many single-sentence paragraphs or no attempt at paragraphing. Organisation of ideas not always logical.
1	<i>Poor</i>	No attempt to organise material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. Incoherent. Ideas introduced in no apparent order.
0		No rewardable structure

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## Indicative Content

Questions are open to interpretation and, therefore, the following notes are not intended to be prescriptive but to give an indication of some of the points which could be made in response to each question. They are by no means exhaustive.

### 6 Н. Гоголь, Шинель

- (a) **Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.**

**Context:** From just past the middle of the story. Akaky Akakievich has attended a party thrown by one of his civil-servant colleagues to celebrate his own nameday and Akaky's acquiring a splendid new coat. Initially overwhelmed by the welcome given to him and generally overawed by the lavish occasion, Akaky had been quickly abandoned by the other guests and had become bored. Though he had tried to leave, the other guests had insisted he stay later than he had intended to toast his new coat with champagne. Eventually, after midnight, Akaky had slipped away in high spirits, nearly, to his surprise, chasing after a woman rushing by. As the clerk moves from his host's fashionable part of town closer to his own humble area, the brightly-lit streets give way to a more desolate and forbidding environment. He has now reached a point where the street meets a seemingly endless square, and his high spirits have turned to fear.

**Content:** Stepping onto the square, Akaky has a premonition of evil and walks on with his eyes closed. When he opens them to see how much further he has to go, he is confronted by two men who proceed to rob him of his coat, threatening him so that he keeps silent and knocking him backwards into the snow so that he passes out. When he comes to, he starts to shout and runs across the square to a policeman who is intrigued as to who might be making so much noise. The clerk accuses the policeman of having been asleep, neglecting his duty and not being able to recognise a robbery. The policeman replies that he had taken the robbers for Akaky's friends and that instead of making such a fuss he should go the Police Inspector who would get his coat back for him. Candidates can comment on the character of Akaky Akakievich, the significance of the coat for him and how its acquisition alters his character, rekindling his interest in life.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** Unlike other areas of the text, this extract contains little evidence of the unnamed self-conscious *skaz* narrator who becomes a character in his own right, apart from the deliberately confusing use of *не без ... невольной* in line 1 and the use later on of *казалось* and *кажется* which may suggest a degree of uncertainty in narratorial perspective. The third-person narrator appears to be omniscient, describing the actions of the characters and quoting in speech marks the thoughts and words of Akaky, the words of the robbers as well as in indirect speech the words of Akaky and the policeman (*будочник*). The narrator and all characters use standard Russian. When the policeman sees Akaky running towards him, he wants to know *какого чёрта бежит к нему*, and this reference to the devil may allude to one interpretation of the text which sees Akaky as being tempted by the devil into acquiring the coat which will then lead to his destruction.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can show how the extract is pivotal to the development of the plot. When Akaky sets about trying to enlist the help of the authorities, he is treated in an off-hand, then accusatory manner by the police and by a VIP. After this, the stunned clerk becomes seriously ill and dies. Candidates can discuss the significance of the negative depiction of officialdom and the general negative portrayal of a society in which the 'little man' falls victim not only to robbers, but also to the consequences of the behaviour of

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the callous, self-interested, lazy, useless and incompetent people in authority, particularly in senior posts.

**(b) What, if anything, is the meaning of *Шинель*?**

Candidates should discuss the various interpretations of the text, assessing whether or to what extent any of them can be considered to be the definitive meaning. The story can be read as a supernatural tale in which Akaky Akakievich returns from the dead to punish those who wronged him in life, a religious allegory in which the clerk is tempted by the devil (Petrovich) into acquiring an object which brings momentary pleasure, but ultimately leads to its owner's destruction or where the clerk's soul is reborn through the influence of love only to be extinguished by the forces of an unspiritual society, a psycho-sexual study of an emotionally stunted individual brought to life through the acquisition of a quasi-love-object and destroyed through its loss or a social study of a 'little man', the victim of bureaucratic inhumanity and social indifference. However, when closely scrutinised, none of these interpretations works consistently from start to finish. Some, perhaps all, of the ghostly robbers have a rather too physical form to be credible ghosts and their victims' perceptions of reality are clouded by conscience and the effects of alcohol. The religious interpretations work partly, only while Akaky is alive and cannot be convincingly extended to the conclusion. The psycho-sexual interpretation falls short because Akaky's erotic adventures are rather feeble: he chuckles at an erotic picture in a shop window on his way to the party, nearly chases after a woman on the way back, but does not, and when relieved of the coat, his love-object, is left with his elderly landlady about whom he has been teased. Candidates might suggest that the socially critical reading is most satisfactory, for though the clerk dies, having fallen victim to robbers and the callous, self-interested, lazy, useless and incompetent people in authority, there appears to be a trace of optimism regarding social progress in relation to the VIP. After he is robbed of his coat by the 'ghost of Akaky' who reproaches him for his conduct, the VIP becomes less overbearing, self-important and listens more to what his subordinates have to say. Thus, some social progress as well as personal reformation of character appears to take place. However, while it is possible to make a case for a social interpretation of the story, this approach is now largely discredited as close analysis of the text reveals it to be really an exercise in style, a form of literary joke. Candidates are likely to conclude that while our attention may be drawn at times to negative aspects of society which are worthy of reform, the lack of realistic characterisation, the resulting lack of empathy by the reader for Akaky Akakievich and the presence of the *skaz* narrator (See Q6C below) render any socially critical interpretation at best dubious and most likely invalid. The best candidates will conclude that though the text at times may contain meaningful sections, overall it is meaningless, due to Gogol's use of the *skaz* device.

**(c) 'The central focus of interest for the reader of *Шинель* is Gogol's enigmatic *skaz* narrator.' Do you agree?**

Candidates should discuss the various aspects of the text which may strike the reader as interesting and important before assessing whether or to what extent it is the enigmatic *skaz* narrator who provides the central focus of interest. Candidates are likely to reject Gogol's partially developed, caricature-like characters as the central focus since it is impossible to empathise fully with them. The story's plot is simple and fairly dull, if read on a literal level. For some, the various possible interpretations of the text may be most important (See Q6B above for detail). Most will likely agree, however, that it is the *skaz* narrator, and Gogol's innovative use of this device which provide the main focus of interest. Having defined the concept of *skaz* narration, candidates will show how effective the device is at various points of the text as a tool to convey or obscure meaning. Gogol's hallmark is a *skaz* narrator whose unreliability, naivety, lack of omniscience, occasional apparent poor memory, shifting narratorial focus, generalisations, circumlocution, digressions and ambiguous comments

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serve to confuse and entertain the reader. The best answers will show how the narrator, who is really a character in his own right, is instrumental in the creation of multiple interpretations of specific events in the plot and meanings for the text overall as well as in the achievement of comic effects throughout. Specific narrative techniques, features of the narrative persona and literary devices permeating the narrator's discourse may be mentioned: the use of *даже* and negative comparison to create comic alogism, self-conscious references to the reader, the story and the writing process, the narrator's habit of focusing on the grotesque, his playing with rhetorical syntax and imagery as in the pathetic passage, the parodying of styles, the use of direct speech, the balance between this and third-person narration by the narrative voice, irony, symbolism, hyperbole etc.

## 7 М. Лермонтов, *Герой нашего времени*.

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** From near the end of *Княжна Мери* (entry of 16 June in Pechorin's diary, though this section is written some weeks after the main event has taken place). Pechorin has challenged Grushnitsky to a duel as the cadet would not withdraw his account of how he and the dragoon captain had attempted to apprehend Pechorin when he had been apparently clandestinely visiting Knyazhna Meri. Pechorin has denied being there, though he is blatantly lying. Previously, Pechorin had overheard a conversation in which it appeared that his adversary was going to trick him into fighting a duel with pistols loaded with blanks. Pechorin insists the duel take place at the edge of a sheer cliff so that the nature of the death of the loser can be concealed from the authorities. Grushnitsky fires first. Unable to aim for Pechorin's head, he simply grazes his knee. Pechorin offers Grushnitsky another chance to retract, but the younger man refuses as he knows Pechorin's pistol contains blanks.

**Content:** Pechorin tells his second in a matter-of-fact manner that his adversaries have forgotten to put a bullet in his pistol, asking him to reload it. When the dragoon captain says the bullet might have rolled out and reloading is against the rules, Pechorin says he will fight him on the same terms. This silences Grushnitsky's second. Grushnitsky is embarrassed and tells his second to stop trying to take Pechorin's pistol. As Pechorin is handed the loaded pistol, the captain tells Grushnitsky he is a fool and that he is throwing away his life. Pechorin once again offers to let his opponent take back his slander: he will forgive everything as he has not been made a fool of, so his pride is satisfied. However, Grushnitsky becomes angry: Pechorin should shoot. He despises himself and hates him and will kill him in the future if Pechorin does not shoot him now. Pechorin fires. Grushnitsky is killed. Everyone is shocked, but Pechorin walks away nonchalantly. However, on seeing Grushnitsky's body, he involuntarily closes his eyes. Candidates can comment on the characters of Pechorin and Grushnitsky, the circumstances of the duel in the wider context of the rivalry between the two men for Princess Meri, the place of the duel in Russian society of the period.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The extract is from Pechorin's diary. This means that this first-person narrator is not only describing the action, but also arranging all the words in direct speech. This means that the account must be considered a possibly subjective one: Pechorin may be casting himself in a better light than is warranted. All characters speak in standard educated Russian, appropriate to their social standing. Pechorin's use of an Italian phrase suggests a high degree of sophistication. The dialogue is fast, often containing broken syntax and very short sentences as well as many imperatives and exclamations. All of this is appropriate for a fast-moving, tense and exciting scene. The pace is reinforced by a high incidence of verbs and a dearth of adjectives.

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**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can discuss the character of Pechorin in the context of the novel as a whole, his motivation for his often strange, cruel and extreme behaviour in relation to the concept of the ‘superfluous man’, his skill at manipulating people in this story and elsewhere in the novel, the place of the events of this story in relation to the chronology of the text as a whole as well as the conclusion of this particular story: Pechorin takes no pleasure from Grushnitsky’s death. On learning from Vera that she has told her husband about their relationship, he tries to see her one more time, but fails due to the death of his horse. This causes him to lose his self-control for a while. He is then ordered to go to the fort at N. Before his departure, he tells Meri, who is pining for him, that he had just been making fun of her, thus causing her to hate him. In the fort he reflects that he could never have settled for quiet joys and peace of mind, preferring storm and battle in his life to fend off boredom.

**(b) Consider the view that the most interesting aspect of *Герой нашего времени* is its structural ingenuity.**

Candidates should first describe and analyse the text’s narrative structure, showing how its complicated nature was experimental, ingenious and innovative in its day. They should then consider other aspects of the text which might be of interest to the reader (the creation of a complex psychological portrait in Pechorin, the depiction of a ‘superfluous man’ and the relevance of this to Russian society of the time, the creation of a range of interesting male and female characters, the depiction of diverse social types, settings and customs belonging to a particular moment in the history of the Russian Empire). While all candidates should agree that the structure of the novel is ingenious, there will be a range of opinion as to whether this aspect is the most interesting and which other aspect might be so considered. The text consists of a framed cycle of five stories, all featuring Pechorin, the central character of the novel as a whole. The stories are presented by a variety of narrators, each of whom sheds progressively more light on Pechorin’s character and the events of the plot. The stories are, however, not presented in chronological order, so that the reader is required to reconstruct the time-line of the plot and re-evaluate his perception of Pechorin from the first two stories in the light of the more intimate first-person narrative of his journals with their confessional episodes. This poses a considerable challenge for the reader, and some may find it too hard a task. Thus the artistic success of the text may be called into question. After a preface, the frame narrator of Бэла encounters a captain (Максим Максимыч) whose first-person account of Bela and Pechorin is reproduced by the frame narrator, complete with dialogue. In Максим Максимыч, the frame narrator tells of a later meeting with the captain during which he himself encounters Pechorin and comments on his character. At the end of this story, the author acquires Pechorin’s journals. In the Предисловие [to Pechorin’s Journals], the frame narrator justifies their publication as their writer has now died. The reader is now presented with a first-person account by Pechorin of an adventure in a sea port (Тамань), an intimate diary with dated entries by Pechorin (Княжна Мери), chronicling his manipulation of the emotions of two women and the events leading up to a fatal duel after which Pechorin is exiled to the fortress commanded by Максим Максимыч, and a short first-person account by Pechorin of an incident perhaps clarifying his relationship with fate (Фаталист). See Q7C for detail about Pechorin and other main characters. The novel’s characters encompass a range of social types, revealing a variety of behaviour and attitudes well beyond the confines of the polite society of European Russia to which Pechorin belongs, depicted at the fashionable spa in Княжна Мери. We learn about the Ukrainian underclass represented by ‘honest smugglers’ on the Black Sea, army life in remote areas of the empire, the often tense relationships between Russians and non-Russians, especially tribesmen in the Caucasus whose attitudes to women and revenge stem from their Muslim heritage. We are offered descriptions of rites of passage (wedding, funerals), celebrations, balls, soldiers’ drinking and gambling sessions, the rules of courtship, the gentleman’s code of honour, duelling etc. There are attractive descriptions of varied geographical settings from the Georgian military highway to the Black Sea coast, local buildings and accommodation, food,

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clothing, weaponry and languages spoken (Tatar in *Бэла*, Caucasian vocabulary in *Максим Максимыч*, Ukrainian in *Тамань* and French in *Княжна Мери*), all of which add local colour and help to define social types. Numerous intertextual references, both explicit and implicit, permeate the work, indicating the canon of works known to the cultured reader of the time and providing interest for the literary and cultural historian of today.

**(c) ‘In the character of Pechorin, Lermontov has created a rounded psychological portrait in whom we can readily believe.’ Do you agree?**

Candidates should describe and analyse the character of Pechorin as revealed to us through the text’s various narrators including Pechorin himself. They should then discuss whether or to what extent Lermontov has created a rounded psychological portrait of an individual and whether his creation is one the reader finds credible. The young officer’s character is revealed both through the eyes of third person narrators who are themselves part of the action of the novel and through the words of Pechorin himself in his diary. A detailed psychological portrait of a ‘superfluous man’ is thus created. Pechorin is confident, courageous, charming, handsome and can display good taste in manners and dress. He is highly intelligent, strong willed and individualistic, but, due to the nature of Russian society, doomed to inactivity and thwarted ambition. Deprived of a focus for using his undoubted talents, he becomes bored, bitter, aimless and thoroughly dissatisfied with life. Alienated and isolated from society, Pechorin ruthlessly pursues his own goals and pleasures, delighting in his skilful manipulation of those around him and ruthlessly pushing aside those who get in his way. In *Бэла* we see him manipulate Azamat into abducting his sister for Pechorin in exchange for the opportunity to steal a wonderful horse. Bela is a reluctant bride and must be craftily wooed over a period of time before she finally gives herself to him. Once the challenge is over, however, Pechorin grows cold to the girl, spending more and more time away hunting. After her terrible death, he reacts by laughing, though we are told he was unwell for a long time and lost weight. In *Максим Максимыч* we see another example of the young man’s cold and self-centred nature when he fails to acknowledge his friendship with his former fellow officer, politely refusing to stay for dinner to catch up and claiming to be in a hurry to get away. In *Тамань* we see Pechorin become sexually infatuated with a teenage beauty. He shows himself to be vulnerable and, by getting into a boat when he cannot swim, not always to be in control of himself. He also falls victim to robbery by a blind boy, thus appearing to be a fool. His lack of concern about what befalls the old woman and blind boy again illustrates his callousness. *Княжна Мери* especially illustrates Pechorin’s skill at manipulating people for his own pleasure regardless of their own distress. Through the use of cunning psychology, he successfully woos Mary away from the cadet, Grushnitsky, at the same time resuming his relationship with a former lover, Vera, who is now married. Eventually, Vera become jealous of the younger woman and later ruins her own life by admitting her love for Pechorin to her husband. Pechorin ends up killing his younger rival in a duel, though he offers Grushnitsky the opportunity to save his life by admitting he has acted wrongly. Some may argue that, though Pechorin clearly enjoys playing games with people and their emotions, he occasionally shows himself capable of feeling guilt (e.g. towards Meri at the ball on 4 June), pity (towards Vera on same occasion), depression at how he cannot help spoil things for others (5 June), scorn for himself (14 June), regret at killing Grushnitsky (16 June) and deep sorrow when he realises he has lost Vera for ever (16 June). Others may question the sincerity of the self-analysis of his journals since in *Фаталист* we are shown contradictory attitudes to predestination from Pechorin which might cause the reader to doubt the veracity of what he says elsewhere. Candidates are likely to agree that Lermontov has created a rounded character in the sense that he is extremely complex and sometimes contradictory, but not all will find him wholly credible on account of some of his more extreme and unpleasant actions, even taking into account the historical context, though some will argue that he is indeed a credible product of the period.

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## 8 Л. Толстой, *Смерть Ивана Ильича*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** From near the beginning of the penultimate chapter (XI). Ivan Il'ich's death is fast approaching. The sick man has been pondering philosophical questions about the nature of death and the reasons for suffering as a sense of impending death has grown within him. Though he realises that resistance is impossible, he still sees no reason for agony and death as he believes he has lived his life in a correct manner. Petrishchev has formally proposed to Liza. Praskov'ya Fedorovna has come to inform her husband of the good news, but has found he has taken a turn for the worse. When she reminds him about his medicines, he gives her a look so full of animosity she is unable to finish what she wants to say. Liza enters, asking about his health, and receives a similar look along with a comment that he will soon free them all of himself. After sitting silently with him for a little while, both women leave the room.

**Content:** Liza complains to her mother that her father is blaming them: she is sorry for her father but finds it unjust that he tortures them. When the doctor visits, Ivan tells him he knows he can do nothing for him, not even ease his sufferings, so he should leave him. The doctor tells Praskov'ya Fedorovna that now the only thing they can do for him is to give him opium as his sufferings must be terrible. The narrator remarks that Ivan's mental sufferings are worse still. That night, as Ivan had looked at Gerasim's good-natured face, he had finally started to wonder whether his whole life had been wrong. Struggling to defend the way he had conducted himself professionally, socially and domestically, Ivan suddenly realises there is nothing to defend. Candidates can discuss the characters of Ivan Il'ich, his wife and daughter, all of whom have lived false lives according to the rules of society and propriety, contrasting their attitudes with those of Gerasim, the embodiment of Russian peasant virtues and values. The peasant is lauded by the narrator on account of his selfless behaviour and reactions to Ivan Il'ich's illness and death. For Gerasim, death is simply: 'Божья воля. Все там же будем'. Ivan's family, by contrast, find it impossible to speak the truth about his impending demise in his presence or to his face.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The extract contains a rich mixture of voices: it opens with the direct speech of Liza, Ivan Il'ich and the doctor, all of whom speak in the standard educated Russian of the omniscient third-person narrator. The dialogue is particularly poignant because of the absence of narratorial commentary. The narrator then reports the words of the doctor to Praskov'ya Fedorovna before commenting on his observation and clarifying it with his inner knowledge of the dying man. In the last two paragraphs the narrator reveals to the reader Ivan's innermost thoughts and feelings. The second last paragraph ends with an example of unmarked direct speech, while the last sentence of the extract could be read as free indirect speech. In the last paragraph, the significance of the ideas and the moment is emphasised by the repetition of *Ему пришло в голову* at the start of the first two sentences (echoing a similar phrase from the previous paragraph) and the repetition of *И* at the start of three sentences at the end of the paragraph. This adds a sense of biblical authority to the message. There is additional emphasis created through the repetition of *и* in the sentence beginning *И его служба*.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** The extract contains the description of the moment when Ivan experiences his shocking realisation that his whole life has been based on falsehood and deception. As such, it is a key scene and, for many, the most significant in conveying the central theme of the text: the falsity of much that is expressed as true feelings by people, the futility of a materialist outlook and how one should react to the reality of death. Immediately after the extract, Ivan is persuaded by his wife to take communion, confessing his sins, and this appears to provide him with some temporary relief from the idea that he can do nothing

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to rectify his past actions. Though the return of his wife reminds him again of the false nature of his life, Ivan is ultimately able to find some peace, feel sorry for his family and attempt to ask their forgiveness before accepting God and death without fear, despite his terrible physical sufferings.

**(b) Describe and analyse the relationship between Ivan Il'ich and his wife in *Смерть Ивана Ильича*.**

Candidates should describe and analyse the course and nature of the pragmatic and sometimes strained relationship between Ivan Il'ich Golovin and his wife, Praskov'ya Fedorovna Mikhel', from their courtship till his death at the end of the story. The couple had married in their mid-twenties: she out of love, he on account of her looks, moderate wealth, connections and because it was considered the right thing to do by the most highly placed of his associates. The relationship had quickly become strained due to her pregnancy and their lack of common interests, and Ivan began to use his work as a means of escape from his domestic life. Due to their growing rows, within a year of marriage, Ivan had started to see his wife as someone simply to manage his household and provide meals, sex and the propriety of external forms required by society. The relationship deteriorated further after Ivan's appointment as Public Prosecutor in another town where the cost of living had failed to keep up with his salary. Two of their four children had by now died, and Praskov'ya blamed her husband for all the problems in their lives. There were continued squabbles over their son's education and more trivial matters. When, however, after 17 years of marriage, Ivan had obtained a promotion and an increased salary in a post in his old ministry, the couple had both been delighted by the improvement in their circumstances, and their relationship had taken a turn for the better. There were fewer disagreements as both had their own interests, cultivated friends and generally felt satisfied by their separate lives in the capital. With the onset of his first symptoms, Ivan becomes irritable and hard to live with, often starting quarrels. Praskov'ya exaggerates the severity of her husband's temper over the years of their marriage, but exercises self-restraint as she realises his mood is due to some physical discomfort. She starts to pity herself and with this comes hatred for Ivan. Detesting him and wishing him dead, she is equally aware that without him she would be financially worse off. She insists he see a doctor, though she, indifferent to her husband's concern, does not listen properly to his account of the consultation as she is going out with her daughter. She starts to be annoyed at Ivan's growing depression and obsession with his illness, carrying on shopping and visiting friends. Ivan realises she regards him as an obstacle in her path and starts to feel more alone. Praskov'ya blames her husband for not sticking to doctors' orders and thus not getting better. It becomes clear to Ivan that his wife does not understand the thoughts and mental sufferings he is experiencing as he starts to realise he is dying. As a result, he begins to hate her. Praskov'ya is, however, not totally uncaring. When it is clear that there is no improvement, she insists he see a specialist, though this is for her own sake as much as for Ivan's. She cries at the look of hope on her husband's face when Ivan is told there might be a chance of recovery, yet she can still go to see Sarah Bernhardt, claiming the need to chaperon their daughter. As Ivan's condition worsens, he becomes increasingly isolated from her and his other relatives, finding solace in Gerasim, the embodiment of Russian peasant virtues and values, a servant who has a simple, honest attitude to death. Ivan is filled with hate at his wife's healthy look and her apparent refusal to be honest about his condition and therefore prefers his company to that of his wife, even though she appears to want to sit with him out of more than a sense of duty. The pressure of living with a dying man increasingly tells on Praskov'ya. As her husband's condition looks increasingly hopeless, she starts to want her own sufferings to be over as much as his. Trying to persuade Ivan to make his confession, she cries at his initial refusal. After taking the Sacrament, Ivan feels better, though his hatred for all things false returns on seeing his wife again. However, as the moment of death approaches, Ivan realises the immense power of love and the supreme importance of loving others. Suffused with feelings of love, he overcomes his fear of pain and death, pitying his wife and trying to ask for her



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forgiveness. Candidates may also allude to Praskov'ya's behaviour after Ivan's death when she appears to be more concerned with securing her financial position more than mourning the loss of her husband.

**(c) 'Смерть Ивана Ильича is a virulent indictment of the emptiness of society and of individuals within it.' Do you agree?**

Candidates are likely to agree with this statement. Answers will prove the hypothesis by tracing the course of the eponymous hero's gradual realisation that his life, like those of the rest of sophisticated society, has been false and superficial, as he battles a debilitating, painful terminal illness. See Q8B for plot detail. Despite having lived a life in which he continually conformed to society's rules and expectations relating to his professional, social and domestic life and expected material and social advancement, Ivan is shown by Tolstoy to be able to redeem himself and die with a morally correct attitude as to how best to live, though this comes too late for Ivan's new way of thinking to have a positive effect on his family, friends and those he encounters in his public life in the legal profession and Civil Service. Ivan's new enlightened moral stance embodies the moral message of the text, and as such is placed at the end for maximum emphasis. Candidates will contrast this stance with those of other characters whom the reader is made to criticise or admire while considering their words and deeds in relation to their acceptance or otherwise of death, their interest in material and social advancement and their honesty in the expression of their feelings or dealings with each other, clients and patients. We are shown the falseness of the professional dignity of the doctors whom Ivan consults and those in the legal profession who purport to be his friends. The initial reactions of Ivan's colleagues to his death centre on thoughts of how his passing will create vacancies and promotions for themselves and others, and a sense of relief that it is Ivan who has died, rather than they. Petr Ivanovich is made uneasy by the sight of his colleague's body, performs religious rituals which are for him clearly meaningless, just because this is expected, and generally finds his visit to Ivan's widow a tiresome nuisance. For both him and Shvarts, the prospect of a routine card-game is of greater importance than paying their respects or acknowledging the reality of death which awaits us all. Ivan's widow is more concerned with her own suffering than that of her husband. (See Q8B). Throughout her married life she has been chiefly interested in advancing her own material circumstances rather than developing a close spiritual bond with her husband. Ivan's daughter is shown similarly to be focused on her own life and impending marriage. Neither of them can speak honestly to Ivan about his approaching demise and both generally find his illness and suffering an impediment to the smooth running of their lives. Of Ivan's family and friends, it is only his schoolboy son, Vasya, who appears to show heartfelt grief and pity. Honesty, true kindness and genuine compassion are shown only in the words and actions of Gerasim, Ivan's peasant servant. It is this character whom Tolstoy sets up for the reader as an example of morally correct and praiseworthy behaviour. While candidates will doubtless agree with the statement in the question, some will be critical of the author for presenting the characters in too black and white terms, thereby weakening his argument, and for generally being morally tendentious.

**9 A. Чехов, Дядя Ваня**

**(a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the dramatic techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.**

**Context:** From near the beginning of Act 3. Serebryakov has asked that everyone gather in the drawing-room at one o'clock. It is now quarter to one. Voynitsky has made some critical remarks about his brother-in-law while Elena has complained of being bored. When Sonya suggests she help with the estate, teach the children or care for the sick, Elena protests that

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she does not know how to do these things and that they are not interesting. Sonya tries to persuade her otherwise: idleness is catching – her uncle (Vanya / Voynitsky) does nothing but follow her around, she herself has grown lazy and Astrov is neglecting his patients and his forestry by visiting every day. Voynitsky winds Elena up by suggesting she should fall head over heels in love with a water-sprite, apologises and leaves to fetch her a bunch of roses as a peace-offering.

**Content:** With Voynitsky gone, the tension is reduced. Elena and Sonya are looking out of a window. Elena indicates her boredom by voicing her concern about how they will endure the winter on the estate. Now that they are alone, Sonya takes the opportunity to talk to her step-mother in confidence, though in the past there have been tensions between them. Elena inadvertently confirms Sonya's belief that she is not attractive by saying she has beautiful hair. Sonya tells Elena she has loved Astrov for 6 years, but though he is visiting every day, he appears not to notice her, despite her frequent attempts at conversation with direct eye-contact. His lack of response is agony for her. Elena offers to ask him tactfully about his feelings: if he really has no interest in Sonya, he had better not visit again. Sonya nods her head in consent. Candidates can comment on the characters of Voynitsky, Elena, Sonya and Astrov.

**Use of Language and Dramatic Techniques:** The passage consists of an emotional conversation between Sonya and her slightly older step-mother, both of whom speak in standard educated Russian. Elena's first utterance expresses her boredom and frustration at having to live on the estate. The pause which follows this echoes the emptiness she feels. It also provides a natural hiatus in the dialogue before she casually asks where Astrov is. This allows Sonya to reveal her feelings about Astrov to her. Sonya's placing her head on Elena's bosom and Elena's stroking her hair indicate a mutual affection despite earlier tensions and emphasise Sonya's troubled emotional state. The exchange of dialogue is natural. Sonya's long speech displays a range of emotions, moving from dissatisfaction at her own appearance, through warm words describing her love for Astrov to despair that he fails to return her feelings. She speaks in short sentences or phrases with broken syntax indicating spontaneity and an emotional intensity which deeply affects the audience. Elena's apparently thoughtful reaction in similar broken syntax along with pauses and Sonya's nodding rather than replying with words maintain the emotional tension for the audience.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can go into greater detail about the love interest in the play and the tensions and problems this causes for all concerned (Voynitsky's unrequited love for Elena, Sonya's unrequited love for Astrov, Astrov's love for Elena and her struggle not to reciprocate this despite her dissatisfaction with her elderly husband). Answers may also discuss how the characters resolve their dilemmas and / or rejection. Voynitsky and Sonya take consolation in their work on the estate, Astrov returns to his patients and trees while Elena loyally departs for Kharkov with her husband, though she admits to having been a bit in love with the doctor.

**(b) What does Chekhov appear to be saying about the way of life in the country in *Дядя Ваня*?**

Candidates should describe and analyse the image of country life as presented to the audience, attempting to assess whether or to what extent the play, whose subtitle is *Сцены из деревенской жизни*, contains a clear message about its nature. While it is acceptable to focus on the characters and plot, the best candidates will offer a more comprehensive analysis. *Дядя Ваня* depicts scenes from the everyday lives of the provincial intelligentsia of the 1880s. If we compare the main characters to the ignorant poverty-stricken peasants mentioned by Elena and especially Astrov, but never actually seen on stage, those before us are fortunate in every respect. They eat decent food, wear nice clothes and have enjoyed a good education. Throughout the play there are numerous references to Russian and foreign

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cultural and literary figures and their works: Batyushkov, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Schopenhauer etc. Though Voynitsky, Sonya and Astrov have needed or have elected to work hard, none wants for material comfort, unlike the peasants living among filth and disease. With the exception of Marina, the old nanny, the only other representative of another social class to appear on stage is the factory worker in Act 1. Even Telegin, a landowner reduced to poverty, is living in relative comfort. The image of country life as it appears on stage is therefore skewed in favour of the better-off. Nevertheless, we are not presented with an idealised view of country life as almost all characters are dissatisfied with their lives and prospects for most of the play. Candidates can describe the difficult and unsatisfactory relationships between Astrov and Sonya, Astrov and Elena, and Voynitsky and Elena as well as the major conflict between Voynitsky and Serebryakov. In all of these strained relationships, the conflict is rooted in a lack of emotional reciprocity and an inability on the part of one or both characters to communicate their true emotions and feelings. Candidates should provide specific reasons why various characters are dissatisfied or unhappy apart from the obvious (unrequited love and frustrated passion): both Serebryakov and his wife hate the tedium and unsophisticated nature of life on the estate compared to their former life in the town; Elena prefers to remain idle, claiming not to know how to be a teacher or doctor to the peasants, though she is clearly qualified to help improve their quality of life. Voynitsky attempts to murder his brother-in-law because of his frustration at having wasted his own life and opportunities by working selflessly on the estate to finance the professor's dubious academic career. Both Voynitsky and Astrov seek consolation from life's problems through drinking vodka. Through Astrov, the audience becomes aware of the destruction of the countryside, though little has yet been created in its place. The countryside and society in general are both in a state of transition and the intelligentsia is beginning to redefine its place within it. Even Mariya Vasil'evna, Voynitsky's elderly mother, appears to be politically engaged as she shows an interest in women's rights and political pamphlets. Though much of the play is gloomy, the ending is more optimistic with a degree of hope being offered for the future. Those who had fallen out are largely reconciled, while Astrov, Sonya and Voynitsky find happiness in altruistic hard work and / or a belief that they will be given their due reward in heaven.

**(c) 'Voynitsky is chiefly to blame for his own misfortune.' Do you agree?**

Candidates should first describe and analyse the character of Voynitsky (Uncle Vanya) and the unfortunate situation he finds himself in before going on to consider whether or to what extent he is chiefly to blame for his own misfortune. Ivan Petrovich Voynitsky is 47. For the past 25 years he has been conscientiously managing the family's estate for a meagre 500 roubles a year so that his brother-in-law, Professor Serebryakov can use the profits to finance his life in the town where he has passed himself off as a serious academic. As a result of Voynitsky's skill and hard graft, the estate is in an excellent state and even free of debt. Though the estate technically belongs to Sonya, her father wishes to sell it, claiming they could all live better by investing the profits from the sale, though really he wishes to escape the boredom of country life. Voynitsky finds Serebryakov both insensitive and ungrateful, for he has never once thanked him for his services. He has also realised that his efforts have been wasted in that his brother-in-law appears never to have written anything original or important. The admiration he once had for Serebryakov has turned to hatred as he believes he himself might have been a Schopenhauer or a Dostoevsky, had he had a normal life. He also feels that personal happiness has passed him by. He has now fallen in love with Elena, Serebryakov's wife, whom he knew ten years before, though at that time he did not fall in love with her. Because of his deep frustration at the lack of emotional happiness in his life, his anger at being cheated by Serebryakov and at his own naivety, Voynitsky tries to shoot his brother-in-law when he informs a family gathering about his plans for the estate. Its sale would not only render him homeless, but take away the point of his existence. Later, he steals morphine from Astrov in order to commit suicide. All of his attempts at murder and self-destruction are unsuccessful, however. In Act 4, Voynitsky is rescued from the depths of

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despair by Sonya, his assistant of many years to whom he has passed on his values of hard work and self-sacrifice. She persuades him to return the morphine and become reconciled with her father. At the very end of the play, Voynitsky is seen comforted by Sonya and her belief in a reward in heaven in return for altruistic labour on earth. Candidates will display a range of opinion as to whether Voynitsky is a victim of his own selfless world-view, his naivety about the situation he has let himself get into, his misplaced regard for Serebryakov and his failure to make the most of his opportunities as well as the extent to which Serebryakov or society in general are at fault.

## 10 M. Булгаков, *Роковые яйца*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** From Chapter 4. The narrator has implied that Professor Persikov's assistant, Ivanov, has leaked news about the discovery of the red ray to the outside world, and as a result, a story has appeared in *Известия*. The next day, Al'fred Arkad'evich Bronsky, a journalist contributing to several Moscow journals, turns up at the Institute, asking to speak to the professor. Persikov initially tries to have him sent away, but the journalist re-presents his visiting card on which he has written his request, emphasising his links with a journal published by the secret police. Persikov tells Pankrat, the watchman, to let in the journalist. The well-dressed young man is wearing boots with hoof-like toes, implying links with the devil.

**Content:** Persikov is at first fully in control of the situation, and asks the journalist why he is there, using such a strong tone of voice that Pankrat leaves, presumably to avoid witnessing a disagreeable scene. The narrator describes the obsequious bowing of the journalist combined with his method of taking in his surroundings in order to make notes. The exaggerated forms of behaviour produce a comic effect, though the elusive nature of the journalist's eyes start to suggest a sinister power. The fawning nature of Bronsky's mode of address and his exaggerated description of the reaction to Persikov's discovery strike the reader as comic. This is also true of the professor's reaction (заныл...пожелтев) and his frequent protestation that he is busy. During the rest of the extract, we witness the journalist's skilful, smooth interrogation of the professor who becomes increasingly disconcerted (теряется and later потерялся). The journalist has clearly been briefed as he asks for confirmation of what Persikov is working on, whether he has discovered the ray of new life, and elicits by how many times the vital activity of protoplasm might be increased. The хищная радость in the eyes of the journalist reflects the attitude of the narrator, describing negatively both the character of the individual journalist and the nature of journalists as a whole. Persikov's reference to the devil (Ведь это чёрт знает что такое!) endows the visitor with an aura of evil, later borne out when the professor's expropriated discovery and knowledge are misused by the State with dire consequences. Candidates can discuss the characters of Persikov and Bronsky and what they represent (pre-Revolutionary arrogance combined with academic values contrasted with Revolutionary arrogance and ignorance).

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The extract consists almost entirely of dialogue between Persikov and his visitor with only occasional narratorial intrusions, usually externally focalised. The narrator relates the words of characters, describes their behaviour, tone of voice and facial expressions. The narrator shows he also has access to Persikov's thoughts when we read: И Персиков вдруг почувствовал, что теряется. The professor's increasing feeling of being flustered is reflected in the broken syntax of his replies. Persikov's perspective is also shown when we read his direct thought linking the nature of the journalist's questioning to the devil. Both characters use standard educated Russian, appropriate for their social status. This register is shared by the narrator.

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**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can give a brief account of the plot of the story, the dire consequences for Russia and individuals when the State purloins the professor's discovery and the text's overall message. See Q10C below.

**(b) What are the targets of Bulgakov's satire in *Роковые яйца*?**

Candidates should describe the targets of Bulgakov's satire in the text. The best answers will contain detailed explanations about the nature of the satire and how this would have appeared to Bulgakov's readers at the time of writing. In the character of Persikov, Bulgakov pokes fun at the archetypal mad scientist. Persikov has a comic appearance (strangely shaped, bald head, thin, squeaking voice etc.), an obsession with his work, resulting in a largely solitary life, an intellectual arrogance (his habit of failing large numbers of students) and a generally high-handed nature when interacting with people of whom he disapproves. Despite his obvious intelligence, he often appears out of his depth when dealing with practical matters and behaves immaturely or incongruously in situations to which he is unaccustomed. For example, when leaving the Institute, he is unable to put on his galoshes correctly (chapter 2). After his talk in the Tsekuba about the red ray and its effect on the ovule, he is overawed by the audience's reception. He tears up the seven amorous notes thrown onto the stage and has to be forcibly dragged back onto it, bowing irritably, his hands sweaty, his bow-tie considerably out of place (chapter 7). The bulk of the satire, however, is directed at aspects of the new Soviet system and those who serve it. Officialdom is portrayed as incompetent and arrogant. Believing themselves able to handle and exploit the ray despite the professor's warning that it is still untested, the Bolsheviks not only make fools of themselves, but also unleash great danger upon individuals and the country as a whole. What should have been the next stage in Rokk's brilliant, Revolutionary bureaucratic career turns out to be a disaster after the wrong eggs are delivered to the sovkhos of which he is head, for reptiles hatch instead of chickens, and his wife is eaten by a giant snake. The Red Army proves inadequate to the task of containing the rampaging creatures. The mock lyrical prose used for the account of events at the sovkhos furthers the debunking of Rokk and the party he serves. The pompously named and renamed commission of sixteen officials, set up to deal with the chicken emergency (chapter 7), is clearly ineffective. The men from the Lubyanka whom Persikov brings in to investigate his suspicious visitor (chapter 5) are dressed and behave like caricatures, summoning the semi-literate secretary of the House Management Committee and demanding from him the galoshes of the professor's visitor, a ridiculous caricature of a foreign agent. Shchukin and Polaytis, the secret policemen who visit the sovkhos to verify Rokk's claims (chapter 9), fall victim to the reptiles, their single, imported, electric revolver proving completely inadequate for their defence. Throughout the text, Soviet products are generally absent or inadequate. The egg orders and the equipment for making the experimental chambers all come from abroad. While the spread of the foul pest within the USSR is only halted when it reaches the sea or heat of Soviet Central Asia, the authorities in other countries are shown to be more competent and successful in dealing directly with the emergency, for it is 'amazingly' held up right on the borders with Poland and Romania. Mention should be made of the depiction of the Soviet journalists as ruthless hacks, determined to write their story along preconceived lines regardless of the version actually given by Persikov. Bronsky is both obsequious and disconcerting, while the second journalist, the contributor to the *Вестник промышленности*, is persistent in a different way. Both are highly grotesque, Bronsky with his hoof-like feet and the corpulent hack with his clicking, mechanical leg. Persikov is bewildered by the inaccuracy of the reporting and the prominence of the story in the media (chapter 4). The editorial office of *Известия* is shown as lacking appetite for the new or sensational. The editor and the typesetters dismiss the sighting of a giant ostrich as a drunken hallucination. Ivanov, yawning, finds nothing of interest in the next day's edition. Only a day later do they print the story with the result that the paper sells out. The ignorance of the peasantry is ridiculed in the reaction of the peasant women to the death of the chickens. Matrena (chapter 5) believes someone has put the evil eye on the poultry and suggests calling in a priest to conduct a service. The best candidates

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might make reference to parallels between Trotsky and Rokk and to how the latter appears to parody the former's beliefs. For example, Rokk's attempt to charm the giant snake with music from *Evgeny Onegin* parodies Trotsky's beliefs that in the new, socialist society artistic masterpieces will elevate the uneducated proletariat and that nature will be entirely in man's control.

**(c) 'Through *Роковые яйца*, Bulgakov clearly rejects the Revolution as a means of achieving human progress.' Do you agree?**

Candidates are likely to agree with this statement and will discuss the plot, interpreting it as an anti-Bolshevik allegory. Professor Persikov, a middle-aged, eminent zoologist specialising in reptiles, discovers a red ray with amazing properties: when exposed to the ray, organisms reproduce at remarkable speed. Ivanov, his assistant, constructs a special chamber containing mirrors to amplify the effects of the ray. Persikov conducts experiments with frog-spawn which produce incredible results. Thousands of tadpoles hatch in the course of two days, growing into frogs within another and breeding a new generation within two more. Persikov kills off the results of his experiments with cyanide. When news of the discovery reaches the ears of the authorities, an aspiring Soviet bureaucrat, Rokk, decides to have the professor's discovery and equipment expropriated in order to restore the country's chicken population which has been wiped out by foul pest. Despite Persikov's protestations that the technique is untested and therefore dangerous, a sovkhos is set up to begin production. Due to a bureaucratic error, a consignment of reptile eggs intended for Persikov is instead sent to the sovkhos where the ignorant Rokk, unable to recognise the kind of eggs he is working with, has them successfully hatched. The giant creatures escape and quickly reproduce, killing his wife and wreaking havoc on the Smolensk region before advancing towards Moscow. The Red Army is unable to contain them, and there are innumerable human casualties. The city is terrified, and a violent, ignorant mob descends on Persikov's institute, smashing it up and lynching the professor whom they blame for the calamity. Russia is saved only through a freak of nature – a severe August frost which kills off the rampaging creatures. Long epidemics follow before, in the following spring, Moscow begins to regain its former way of life. The message is, therefore, that politicians should not interfere in matters about which they have inadequate knowledge and expertise, for ignoring the warnings of experts can lead to disaster on a massive scale, including the loss of valuable knowledge for ever. Ivanov is unable to replicate Persikov's discovery after the professor's death, however hard he tries. Human progress can best be achieved through knowledge developed by the well educated, not through the rudimentary efforts of ordinary, ignorant people with artificially enhanced status and authority, however well intended they may be. Throughout the story, Soviet officials and aspects of the system put in place by the Bolsheviks, are held up to ridicule (See Q10B), thus emphasising the message of the text.

**11 В. Маяковский, *Клоп***

**(a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the dramatic techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.**

**Context:** From the beginning of Scene 8, (Part 2). Prisytkin, who has remained frozen in an ice-filled cellar following the fire at his wedding, has been revived. He has been spreading infection everywhere. He taught a dog to walk on its hind legs after which all dogs no longer bark, but beg instead. Prisytkin has been finding it hard to adjust to the world of 1979. As a result, he has been given beer, a substance no longer known. The fumes have made the workers in the science laboratories dizzy. Many of those who sampled it have been hospitalised. A girl who heard Prisytkin playing his guitar and crooning has been infected with the disease called love. Other infected people have been dancing in chorus-lines and

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fox-trotting. The escaped bedbug, a rarity, has been found and, after much effort, captured and placed in the zoo as a tourist-attraction. Prisyarkin is lying in bed, filthy, his room like a pigsty. His table is littered with cigarette butts and empty bottles.

**Content:** Prisyarkin's doctor remarks to the professor that he is feeling terrible on account of his patient's breath. He is worried all the staff will be infected. Prisyarkin demands a drink and is given a little beer. He reproaches the professor for resurrecting him and then making fun of him. The professor points out that society hopes to raise him up to a human level, but Prisyarkin tells him to go to hell: he had not wished to be resurrected and wants to be refrozen. The professor states he does not understand him: lives now belong to the collective. The loss of control over one's own life is here being criticised. Prisyarkin feels out of place in 1979 as he cannot even affix a pin-up to the smooth translucent walls of his room. His lack of affinity with the world of 1979 (and therefore Mayakovsky's condemnation of its values) is further shown when Zoya Berezkina enters with two piles of books. Here the comedy of the opening lines gives way rapidly to serious criticism of the society of the future. Prisyarkin has requested something dealing with romantic concepts (roses and daydreams), but Zoya informs him that now no one knows anything about what he has asked for. Only textbooks on horticulture deal with roses, while daydreams are dealt with under medicine. She offers him two books from Prisyarkin's period, both by politicians, which Prisyarkin rejects as crude propaganda. He desires something for the heart and soul which will pluck at his heart strings. This Zoya cannot comprehend. Though she is also from an earlier time, she has apparently lost the ability to comprehend feelings. The extract concludes with Prisyarkin's heartfelt questioning of what they have fought for, why blood has been shed, if he, a leader (of the proletariat) cannot now dance to his heart's content.

**Use of Language and Dramatic Techniques:** The extract consists of lively, fast-moving dialogue involving four characters. As such, it is typical of the arrangement of speeches in the play. All characters use standard Russian, reflecting their level of education. The scene is initially comic due to the posture, behaviour and words of Prisyarkin and the exaggerated verbal and physical reaction of the professor to his revolting breath. However, it acquires a more serious tone from the point when the professor states that society hopes to raise the patient up to human level. The professor's refilling of Prisyarkin's glass while asking him not to breathe in his direction restores the comedy for a brief moment before more serious revelations emerge about the loss of human feelings in the future socialist society from the exchanges between Prisyarkin and his former girl-friend. Because of the juxtaposition of comedy with the expression of serious ideas, the audience is disconcerted and its interest is maintained.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can discuss in greater detail the characters of Prisyarkin and his former girl-friend, Zoya, the significance of Prisyarkin being unfrozen in 1979 and how he and his value-system relate to that of the clinical, futuristic world of the second half of the play. Mention will be made of the duel satire (that of the NEP-man and his bourgeois philistine values in Part 1 and that of the clinical future world of 1979 in Part 2).

**(b) Describe and analyse the different types of comedy and humour in *Клоп*.**

Candidates should describe and analyse the different types of comedy and humour in the play. The best candidates will discuss a wide range of examples, pointing out the extent to which each type features and suggesting how effective each type is. Answers should contain a description of the satire and specific examples of its targets. For example, the State's obsession with documents and bureaucracy is shown when Prisyarkin realises he will have to fill out many forms to pay fifty years of unpaid union dues in Scene 6. Candidates should provide an account of a number of humorous moments in the plot (situation comedy) and a description of a range of the comically grotesque characters (comedy of character). One of these (Bayan) is a thinly disguised satirical portrait of Vladimir Sidorov, a poet who had

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concerned himself with the literary education of young workers. See Q11C for details of characters and plot. Much of the humour results from incongruity. For example, the speeches at the wedding (Scene 3), are full of inappropriate political clichés, and the ditty poking fun at the supposedly boring poetry of Nadson and Zharov as well as warning of the dangers of fire, recited by the firemen at the end of Scene 4, does not follow on naturally from the discovery of the charred bodies of most of the hitherto main characters. Slapstick humour is present in the comic fights and other violent incidents (e.g. between Rozaliya Pavlovna and Zoya at the end of Scene 1 and during the grotesque fight between drunken guests at the end of Scene 3 resulting in the bride's wedding veil catching fire and the deaths of all but Prisytkin. Linguistic humour appears in the comic names of characters and in word-play. The best candidates may discuss the frequent parodying of genres and specific works by writers known to Mayakovsky's audience, (e.g. the parodying of the cries of newspaper sellers at the end of Scene 5 – based on Mayakovsky's own commercial poetry – or when Prisytkin sings lines from Vertinsky's romance, *Лиловый негр*, to the newly unfrozen bedbug at the end of Scene 6. Bawdy or crude humour features in the repair-man's comment about E'izevira's breasts in Scene 2, in Bayan's commentary to Prisytkin's attempt to dance the foxtrot with an imaginary partner in the same scene, in the best man's incorrect picking up of the word мать and later петит истуар as писуар in Scene 3. Visual humour is present in the more grotesque elements of costumes, props and sets and in the exaggerated physical actions and reactions of characters to events and each other. See Q11A for specific examples.

**(c) 'Mayakovsky's dramatic techniques in *Клоп* make more impact than his message.' Do you agree?**

The quotation is likely to produce a range of opinion. Some candidates will agree, some will disagree, while yet others may argue that Mayakovsky's dramatic techniques and his message make an equally strong impact on the audience. Answers should describe the playwright's dramatic techniques as well as discuss the message of the play before coming to a conclusion about which aspect of the play, if any, is the more powerful. In describing and analysing Mayakovsky's dramatic techniques, candidates will mention some of those below, the best candidates discussing several and prioritising their importance. Mayakovsky creates grotesque characters whose exaggerated features and episodic appearances in the play prevent the audience from fully empathising with them. Thus, Zoya's shooting herself (Scene 2), the deaths of the wedding guests (Scene 4) or Prisytkin's plight in Part 2, are viewed with an intellectual rather than emotional response. The plot is dynamic, fast-moving and contains several incidents with life-changing consequences for the characters. Moving from a reasonably recognisable present in Part 1 to a bizarre, technological, futuristic world in Part 2, it holds the audience's attention while disconcerting and shocking it. Maykovsky provides detailed stage directions and notes about the set at the beginning of each scene. The striking, unusual nature of the sets, especially in the second part, also reinforces the alienation effect, allowing the audience to distance itself from the characters, limit empathy with them and analyse their behaviour objectively. In Meyerhol'd's original production, the use of challenging incidental music by Dmitry Shostakovich, the featuring of contemporary dance (e.g. the chorus girls and foxtrot in Scene 7), original and outlandish sets and costumes by the Kukryniksy and Rodchenko, contributed much to the atmosphere and dramatic effect of the work. The use of rapid, sometimes noisy dialogue, often involving several characters in quick succession, requires the audience to concentrate in order to be able to follow events on stage. The audience is also required to engage with Mayakovsky's use of puns, wordplay, parody, intertextual references to his own works and those of others and the frequent mentioning of contemporary cultural and political figures from around the world. Thus Mayakovsky, in effect, makes the spectator a participant in the action, forcing him into a response to the play's powerful political message. *Клоп* is an attempt to criticise through virulent satire various aspects of the philistinism the author saw taking hold in society as a result of NEP. Mayakovsky shows his disdain for those who have made elements of pre-Revolutionary life a part of their everyday existence in the USSR through the character of



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Prisyarkin, the embodiment of a number of bourgeois traits, tastes and values. The former Party member styles himself Pierre Skripkin, has a penchant for fashionable clothes and hair, likes to wear a tie, dances the foxtrot and sees it as his right to have the good life since he has fought for it. The former worker, now would-be writer, abandons his pregnant girlfriend, Zoya, to marry El'zevira, the cashier of a hairdressing and beauty salon, failing to react appropriately when Zoya attempts to shoot herself. During the wedding speeches, a grotesque fight develops, ending with a fire from which there are apparently no survivors. However, Prisyarkin *does* survive, frozen in a cellar. In 1979, when he is discovered, a democratic vote is taken about whether to unfreeze him or not. Despite the reservations of many that there is a danger of the arrogance and sycophancy of the late 1920s being spread, the majority vote for him to be brought back to life. But Prisyarkin *does* spread the feared diseases along with a liking for alcohol, cigarettes, decadent music, dancing and love. Ultimately, he is exhibited in a zoo together with the bedbug which was unfrozen with him, two parasites sharing a cage and highlighting the 'horrors' of a bygone age. The zoo director announces that the mammal was wrongly classified as belonging to the highest group of humanity, the workers, and suggests he is more dangerous than the bedbug, being able to lure his victims with his pre-Revolutionary behaviour and tastes, disguised as those of the new society. In a final twist, reminiscent of Gogol's *Ревизор*, Prisyarkin addresses those come to view him, hailing them as his brothers and inviting them to join him. Some candidates will regard the cold, sterile, rational world of 1979 in Part 2 as simply a device for throwing Prisyarkin's philistinism into sharp relief because his character, attitudes and desires are alien and incomprehensible to those who inhabit it. Others, however, will argue that Mayakovsky also intends through satire to question the desirability of an 'ideal' Socialist future utopia by depicting a world where dancing only exists as a form of mass physical exercise, the guitar is unknown, tobacco and alcohol are regarded as poisons and where, until Prisyarkin spreads his primitive germs, love, jealousy and passion have been absent. All candidates are likely to agree that the play's message is powerful and effective, whether it is interpreted as a single or dual satire.

## 12 B. Некрасов, *Кира Георгиевна*

- (a) **Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.**

**Context:** The extract comes from the end of Chapter 10. Kira has left Moscow to join Vadim in Kiev. Both Nikolay Ivanovich and Yurochka had seen her off at the station. Feeling lonely, Kira's husband has invited her lover home for tea and to show him the portrait he has been working on. He has brought out some of his old drawings and even given one to the young man who is embarrassed, uncomfortable and wanting to leave.

**Content:** Nikolay Ivanovich continues to show Yurochka examples of his work, including the sole surviving portfolio of his pre-war creativity. It contains a portrait of his son when still at school. The boy, later a lieutenant in the artillery who had been killed in 1941 in the fighting outside Moscow, had also been called Yura, and it seems to the old man that something in Yurochka reminds him of his child. The boy had been a talented artist in his own right. As Nikolay Ivanovich shows Yurochka examples of his work, it is clear that the father is proud of his beloved child. Though the father had taught the son, the son had instilled his healthy optimism and fresh view of life in his father. Nikolay Ivanovich thinks Yurochka and Yura would have got on well together. Candidates can show how Yurochka, like Yura, represents potential, a chance to re-evaluate the rules of society and, by implication, the rules governing art. For Nikolay Ivanovich, a representative of the pre-Revolutionary intelligentsia who had enthusiastically embraced the ideals of Socialist Realism, it is significant that he desires the company of Yurochka rather than that of artists of whom he is tired. Yurochka makes up his

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mind not to repeat the visit, however, for though he likes his host, he feels uncomfortable with him because of his relationship with the old man's wife.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The extract consists mainly of the words of Nikolay Ivanovich given in direct speech, interspersed with occasional commentary by the omniscient third-person narrator. Both use a similar register – that of the educated professional classes. The discourse of Nikolay Ivanovich is made up of short, apparently random sentences or phrases which convey an effect of spontaneous thought and delivery. Often these begin with *Вот* or *И*. The extract shows evidence of a complex mingling of voices. In paragraph 1, the speaker's flow is interrupted once by the narrator: *он развернул папку*. This is reversed in paragraph 2 when Nikolay Ivanovich interrupts the narrator: «это когда он был в Артеке». The word *очевидно* could belong to the discourse of either the narrator or Yurochka since it implies deduction on the part of someone. The same can be said of the word *чувствовалось* in paragraph 4 where the narrator is reflecting the perspective of Yurochka as he listens to his host's words. From *в пытливом интересе* to the end of the paragraph, there appears to be a fusion of perspectives between the narrator and the old man. Paragraph 5 consists of Nikolay's discourse interrupted once by an objective comment by the narrator: *Николай... тесёмки*. The next two paragraphs belong exclusively to the narrator and Nikolay respectively. In the last paragraph, the use of *может быть* suggests either that the narrator is not wholly omniscient or his perspective has become fused with that of Yurochka who is confused as to his motivation for not repeating the visit.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can describe the characters of Nikolay Ivanovich and Yurochka, the complexities of their relationships with Kira and with each other. They will provide some detail about how both their relationships with Kira are threatened by the arrival of Vadim, her first husband, and how the story ends. When Nikolay Ivanovich becomes dangerously ill, Kira comes to realise that her present and future lie with him and that her attitude to life has hitherto been false and shameful. Vadim's honesty and positive world-view seem to have rubbed off on Kira as well as on Yurochka with whom he has an instinctive bond. The model's brief affair with the sculptress can be seen as an educative experience. Though he feels shame at betraying the trust and friendship of her husband, he is able to move on, taking his life away from Kira in a positive direction.

**(b) What do you consider to be the main theme of *Купа Георгиевна*?**

Candidates may either offer a detailed discussion of one theme, arguing its dominance as a leitmotiv within the context of the plot or they should discuss the text's various themes, putting them into some sort of hierarchy before coming to a conclusion that one is more significant than the others. Because of the nature of this text, it is likely that candidates may argue that as the themes are cleverly interwoven and largely interdependent, it is therefore impossible to single one out as being more important than the others. Answers are likely to contain a short description of the plot in order to exemplify and justify the points made. In his introductory paragraph, Nekrasov writes that his *povest'* is firstly about an individual whose life has contained personal tragedy as well as good fortune (Kira), those around her, the problems they sometimes have in dealing with the past, but mainly about the honest and dishonest, half-baked relationships of people to life, creativity and to themselves. The text can therefore be read as a critique of the sometimes extravagant yet spiritually empty and superficial everyday lives of the privileged cultural élite, in particular of one individual, Kira, a 41 year old, self-centred sculptress with a husband some 20 years her senior and a toy-boy who could well have been her son as she struggles to justify her morally dubious behaviour to herself. The sub-theme of the problem of the returnee from Stalin's camps, his rehabilitation and reintegration into society is introduced when Kira's original husband, Vadim, appears on the scene after an absence of 20 years. The couple attempt to restore the happiness of their youthful relationship, but though they are quickly attracted to each other once again, it proves impossible to wipe out the people and events of the intervening

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years and the effects they have had on their personalities and world-views (the theme of the effects of time on the individual). When Nikolay Ivanovich becomes dangerously ill, Kira comes to realise that her present and future lie with him and that her attitude to life has hitherto been false and shameful. Vadim also discovers that the clock cannot be turned back, for he cannot give up his present wife and their young son. The themes of love, passion, facing up to the truth and the inevitable, personal morality and responsibility are therefore inextricably linked through the events of the plot. Interwoven throughout the text are also several broad themes dealing with art and society: the relationship of the artist to art, the relationship of the artist and art to society, the nature and purpose of art (a questioning of the merits of Socialist Realism), the purpose of life and the best way to live it, the nature of Soviet society and the attitude of Soviet society in general to its past. Many of the ideas associated with these themes are expressed through the character of Vadim. Despite his time in prison as an enemy of the people, Vadim is not bitter as he was able to get to know interesting people, think and learn a lot. Rejecting his youth as a vapid time of triviality, he has, in contrast to Kira, an honest and positive world-view: the main thing is to have around you people who need you. This attitude is shared by the lonely Nikolay Ivanovich, who, though a successful and respected artist, longs for meaningful human relationships. Candidates should show how Vadim convincingly challenges the principles of Socialist Realism. In the gallery in Kiev (C12), he questions the eternally optimistic celebratory themes of the paintings: *И почему всё праздник да праздник?* Vadim recognises that the pictures of work make it look effortless, that fighting is depicted as being without hardship and funerals are portrayed as glorified spectacles. Socialist Realist art is openly being criticised for being fundamentally not true to life. In his thoughts on the train to Kiev, Vadim muses over how Kira cannot understand him for she, like all others who belong to the world of art, have only to see what is clear, bright and joyous. He goes on to recall, when with Yurochka, thinking about whether she might in her art be substituting all that is alive and complicated for a convention and fabrication. Through her renewed contact with Vadim, Kira comes to understand that her art is contrived and lifeless, a message that the reader is meant to take from the text's conclusion.

- (c) **'Kira may well be due some sympathy from the reader, but the men in her life have the greater claim.'** Do you agree?

Candidates are likely to respond to this question with a wide variety of opinion regarding both parts of the quotation. While all are likely to sympathise with the young Kira because of the sudden end to her happy married life with Vadim, some will see her ability to carry on her life as a positive character trait, while others will be critical of her quest for artistic success and material reward through her superficial relationship with the elderly Nikolay Ivanovich. Some may find it reasonable that she takes a younger lover, given that Nikolay Ivanovich is 20 years her senior, while others will be critical of her disloyalty. Many will find her abandonment of both these men unfeeling and unbecoming, while others will sympathise with her because of the predicament she finds herself in when Vadim, the love of her life, unexpectedly reappears. The failure of their attempt to re-establish their relationship might bring her sympathy from some quarters, however. The realisation that her attitude to life has been false and shameful and that her art is contrived and lifeless renders Kira miserable, and because, by staying with her sick husband, she appears to have made the correct moral choice, she may well be considered worthy of some pity for this, too. Many will argue that Nikolay Ivanovich is due a great deal of sympathy. He is old, sick and very lonely, despite his artistic success. He has lost one wife and his only son and craves real personal relationships. For him, the main thing is to know one is needed by others, but it is clear that until his illness, Kira does not really need him. That she ultimately decides to stay with him, on the other hand, might mean for some that he has been very lucky and that we no longer have to feel quite so sorry for him. Vadim clearly has suffered unpleasant and unfair punishment by the authorities. Deprived of his liberty and wife for many years, he obviously deserves our sympathy. However, he has grown intellectually and spiritually through his

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experiences, feels no bitterness and has gained many valuable insights about life, art and himself. As a strong personality, he does not, at first sight, require our sympathy, though many will feel deeply for him in his dilemma about leaving his new wife and son for Kira. In the end, he is unable to give up his son and opts to stay with the woman who cared for him in the camp. Though he has obviously been through emotional turmoil, he has made the morally correct decision, and the reader feels he will ultimately be happy with this, given his honest attitude to life. While some will sympathise with Yurochka for the embarrassment he feels in the presence of his lover's husband and to a lesser extent with Vadim, others will criticise him for initially failing to resist Kira's advances. Through his conversations with Nikolay Ivanovich and especially Vadim, Yurochka learns much about life. He grows spiritually and emotionally, and thus does not suffer when abandoned by Kira who has simply become a part of his education about life. He just forgets his relationship with her, for he no longer desires it. Most will conclude that in the end Yurochka does not need our sympathy.

### 13 И. Грекова, *Вдовий пароход*

- (a) Write a commentary on the following extract. You should explain the context in which it occurs; comment on its content, use of language and the narrative techniques employed; comment on its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Context:** From Chapter 37, near the conclusion of the text. Anfisa Maksimovna Gromova, who has survived a stroke, has been discharged from hospital as there is nothing more they can do for her. She is being cared for by Vadim, her spoilt and wayward son, who has returned from the Virgin Lands to care for the mother he once took for granted and abused. In the previous chapter, Vadim has allowed the narrator, Ol'ga Ivanovna Flerova, a brief visit during which she had observed that Anfisa is well cared for.

**Content:** Though months pass, Anfisa's condition does not improve. Vadim is struggling to care for his mother, but refuses help from the other women in the flat because of his feelings of guilt, caused by his previous bad attitude to his mother, reluctance to study, his behaviour with Svetka, his deciding to abandon his course and his mother and go to the Virgin Lands to work. He is exhausted by endless changing of sheets and doing the laundry, cooking, feeding his mother and trying to teach her to speak again. He appears to be intensely frustrated, feeding Anfisa как сердитая нянька опостылевшего ей ребёнка, sometimes getting angry with her when it seems to him that she is deliberately refusing to speak. Devoting himself entirely to caring for his mother, he forgets his previous life and uses up the money he has earned in Siberia. Candidates can describe the characters of Anfisa and Vadim, their difficult relationship throughout the text, initially caused by Anfisa's indulging her son's every whim, his path to redemption and reincarnation as remorseful and dutiful son and his relationship with another wayward student, Klavochka, at their institute and in the Virgin Lands.

**Use of Language and Narrative Techniques:** The extract is narrated by Ol'ga, the main first-person narrator, whose style is flowing, educated standard Russian with a smattering of colloquialisms and phrases suggesting spontaneity of discourse (кое-как, Нет, ничего не получалось.) The extract does not contain the word я and therefore has the appearance of third-person narrative when isolated from the rest of the text. The short sentences in the opening paragraph contain many verbs and these help to convey the idea of quickly passing time and all-consuming activity as experienced by Vadim. The narrator's sympathy for him is evident from the phrase мрачную фигуру. In the extract there is an interesting mixture of voices: the omniscient narration is increasingly broken by colloquial and mimetic marked direct speech (Капа, Vadim, Anfisa) and the narrator's own discourse becomes internally focalised from Vadim's point-of-view: он уже забыл, что... and later ..ему казалось, что... After describing how Vadim has become absorbed in his new life of toil and caring, Ol'ga clearly incorporates Vadim's perspective (his unmarked direct speech or thought) into her

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discourse by using the phrase *либо шах...* since she herself does not know Klavochka whose words and attitude are being quoted.

**Relevance to Rest of Work:** Candidates can discuss how Vadim is forced to treat his mother when his money runs out and he has to get a job, his relationship with the other women in the flat, Anfisa's death and the subsequent possibility of a total change of character and behaviour for her son after her funeral. Mention of the wider relationship between men and women in the society of the USSR, as depicted in the text, may be made.

**(b) Examine Grekova's use of narrative perspective in *Вдовий пароход* and its contribution to the text's artistic success.**

Candidates should describe the interplay of narrative perspectives within the text, assessing its effectiveness as a means of engaging the reader as he tries to form an objective reality from the story-world. The principal voice belongs to Ol'ga whose flowing, educated first-person narrative contrasts with the more colloquial, peasant-like register and points of view of Anfisa and Vadim, grafted into some sections of ostensibly third-person narration and sometimes appearing as free indirect speech. Other sections of omniscient narration can be read as belonging to Ol'ga's discourse, sometimes internally focalised from the point of view of other characters (e.g. Chapter 5). Answers should illustrate how first-person sections, internally focalised third person sections and free indirect speech allow the reader to acquire greater intimacy with the characters' feelings, views and motivation. The apparently random fluctuations in perspective are deliberate and designed to create subtle effects: the creation of multiple points of view in relation to a single event or character or the illusion of an intimate dialogue taking place between Anfisa and Ol'ga (e.g. Ольга Ивановна Вадима теперь разлюбила. [end Chapter 20] compared to ...Нет, я не разлюбила Вадима. [Start of Chapter 21]). First-person and third-person sections of narrative are frequently broken by mimetic, often colloquial direct speech from a range of character types. This conveys an illusion of spontaneity and realism to the events described. Candidates may be divided as to the success of Grekova's technique. For those keen on a challenge, the shifting perspectives add subtlety and ambiguity, and this requires the reader to work hard to extract a meaning from the narrative. Others will find this a hindrance to establishing clarity of meaning at crucial points in the narrative. Yet others may find certain fluctuations and juxtapositions of points of view alarming and even bizarre.

**(c) 'In *Вдовий пароход*, Grekova vividly depicts the terrible and unfair lot of Soviet women.' Do you agree?**

Candidates are likely to agree that the lives and fates of the Soviet women depicted in the text are, in many respects, terrible and unfair, though frequently the lot of male characters is just as stark or sometimes worse. Answers should examine the lives of a range of female characters, assessing whether or to what extent their fates can be described as terrible and unfair. The best answers will contrast the women's lot with that of some male characters, bearing in mind the text's often troubled historical context. Ol'ga loses her husband at the start of the war and shortly afterwards her mother and daughter in an air raid. Wounded and unable to continue as a professional pianist, she recovers from her physical and mental trauma by working as a music teacher for under-threes who respond well to her playing and singing. Over many years, she shares a communal flat with four other women and sometimes their partners, observing the highs and lows of their everyday lives. Most of the text deals with the story of Anfisa who enjoys a happy marriage for 8 years based on an amicable division of labour: her husband, Fedor, works hard outside the home while she deals with domestic matters in an exemplary fashion. When Fedor is called up, Anfisa returns to factory work, but soon chooses to become a nurse at the front where she experiences frightening conditions and is even wounded. Having become pregnant as the

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result of a passionate, casual affair with a man who quickly lost interest in her, Anfisa fears her husband's reaction, should he return from fighting. When he does come back, he is an alcoholic due to emotional and physical damage from his experiences. Contrary to Anfisa's expectations, Fedor not only accepts Vadim as his son, but even forms a strong emotional bond with him and forgives his wife for her transgressions. He beats Anfisa only once when he wants money from her for more drink, an action she regards as better than she deserves. However, Fedor finds that his wife's obliging attitude to him as the result of her sin is suffocating him, and he starts to look for emotional reciprocity in other women in the flat. When Ol'ga breaks off their relationship before it has taken a physical direction, Fedor turns more to drink, loses his job and one day falls under a tram, leaving Anfisa to bring up Vadim on her own. Having pandered to his every whim from birth, Anfisa quickly turns her son into a spoilt, arrogant, selfish and ungrateful child. The boy becomes increasingly moody and resentful of the sacrifices his mother makes for him, even driving away a potential new partner for her through his sullen and jealous behaviour. While still at school, he has an affair with Svetka, but hits her when she tactlessly compares him to another boy he dislikes. When Svetka discovers she is pregnant, Vadim at first denies responsibility, though eventually produces half the money for her to have an abortion. A mediocre pupil, he only scrapes into an institute after his mother pleads with the dean on his behalf. Resentful and out of his depth, he fails his exams, leaving his distraught mother for work in the Virgin Lands where he again mistreats a girl in love with him by simply using her for casual sex. It is only after Anfisa has a stroke and Vadim returns to care for her that mother and son develop a kind of spiritual bond. Vadim strives to make amends for his past attitude, but even his kindness towards his mother is affected by elements of unintentional severity. Overall, he is responsible for a considerable amount of unhappiness for women. In the flat also live Ada, Pan'ka and Kapa. Ada Efimovna Zayats, a former operetta singer, laments her artistic and romantic past. She had married several times and also had lovers, but her life, she thinks to herself, contained no love, only men and abortions. She had been perpetually rejected and deceived. Kapa (Kapitolina Vasil'evna Gushchina) is a religious woman from a poor family in Sergiev Posad, twice widowed. Her first husband was an old man whom she married against her will. They had had a child, but the little boy had died of scarlet fever, aged three. Her first husband died soon after, and she was then married off to an honest, but ugly man who was killed during the collectivisation. She then moved to Moscow, where she fell in love with a married man whose wife attacked her in the hostel in which she lived. The fight resulted in her being thrown out, but she, nevertheless, managed to become a carer for a little girl. Sadly, her lover left her and, shortly afterwards, because her employers had no more need of her, she lost her surrogate child, too. She then worked as a night watch. This allowed her peace and quiet to turn to God for consolation. When she retires, she starts to dream of entering a convent, though there are none left. Pan'ka (Pavla Zykova), a formidable, egalitarian, mannish woman fitter, had been orphaned at an early age. Her husband, an alcoholic, had not wanted children, and therefore she had had 3 abortions before he died of drink. Pan'ka takes a lover who moves in with her for a time, and this causes friction with the other women over the household expenses. For some, the lives of the women are terrible because of the way they are mistreated by men and forced to play a subservient role, but the women themselves are often extremely emotionally resilient, surviving bereavement, separation, abandonment and disappointment, by supporting one another through thick and thin. By contrast, the men who have caused their distress prove less mentally and physically resilient in the face of adversity, degenerating in various ways or simply dying. Thus, their lot is even more awful and possibly unfair, even if they partly bring about their own misfortune.