

2020 HSC Study Day Series



AURORA
COLLEGE

HSC English

Extension 1

Elective

Literary Homelands

English Extension 1

elective: **Literary Homelands**

presented by

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Part 1 – the Elective

“It’s as though I can never leave”

Eileen Chong, ‘Singapore’ (poem)

Look closely at the phrase “as though”.

This elective requires our awareness that ‘literary homelands’ is embodied and expressed through the ambivalence of:

‘as though’

- ambiguity
- ambivalence
- departure
- inevitable return (literal or figurative)
- self-imposed exile

Enquiry question:

- For those who leave their homeland, are they leaving behind more than just a place?

Part 2: The Rubric

Understanding

- explore and evaluate textual representations of how individuals and communities express connections to notions of 'homelands', place and culture
- examine the diverse ways in which the worlds of individuals and communities ... are represented in texts.
- analyse how composers represent different cultural perspectives through the creation of voices and points of view, and how historical and social contexts have an impact on the extent to which perspectives are privileged, marginalised or silenced.
- consider textual representations of experiences of place, country and culture, and complex and diverse migrant experiences, within and beyond Australia, and how these representations may have changed through time.
- critically evaluate the values and assumptions in these representations of diverse cultures in relation to their own values, attitudes and beliefs.

Literary	Homelands
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Books and writing• art• expression• subversion• purpose• imagination• postcolonialism• our responsibility to read the world (related texts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• origins• eternal returnphysical and non-physical• cycles of dispossession• significance of place• personal affinities with place

The Rubric: Applying

- explore, analyse, experiment with and critically evaluate their prescribed texts and other appropriate texts.
- write **imaginative compositions*** that represent the relationship between the individual and their experiences of place and culture.
- students are required to study at least three of the prescribed texts (including at least two extended print texts) as well as other texts of their own choosing. **At least two related texts must be studied.** Texts can be drawn from a range of times, contexts and media and should explore the relationship between the individual and their experiences of place and culture.

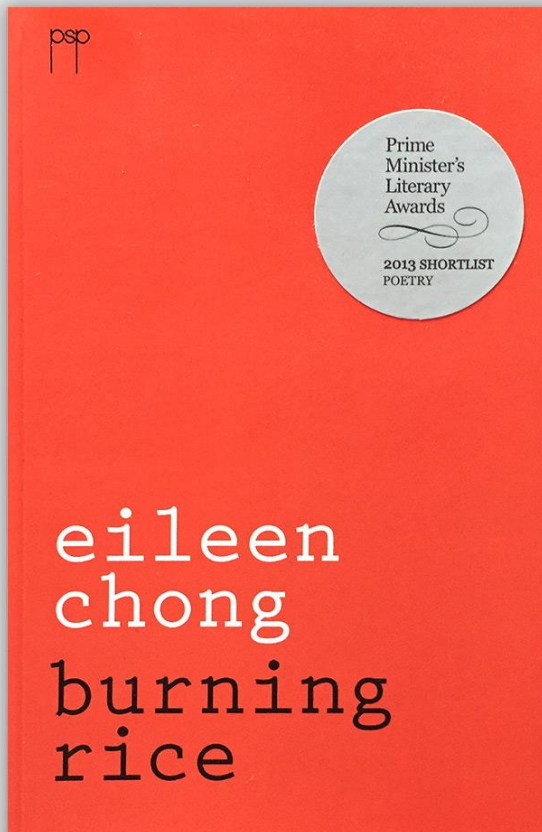
***This presentation will focus on the essay form, which can be described as an ‘analytical composition’ – *not* an imaginative composition.**

Literary	Homelands
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Novels• Poetry• Drama (play adaptation of novel)• Film <p><u>Related Texts</u> non-fiction (recommended) short film short story artworks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• land• language• families• culture• maps• generations• heritage

Part 3 – The Prescribed Texts

One Poet: Eileen Chong

Burning Rice (2012)



the selected poems

Burning Rice

Mid-Autumn Mooncakes

My Hakka Grandmother

Singapore

Chinese Ginseng

Shophouse, Victoria Street

Winter Meeting

One Film

Brick Lane (2007)

Sarah Gavron, Director

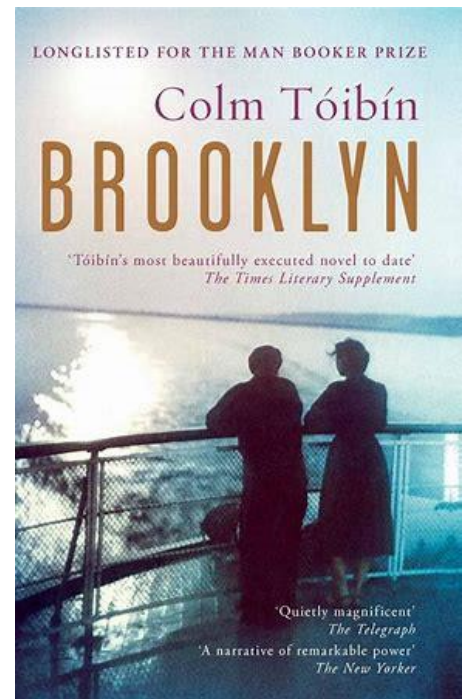
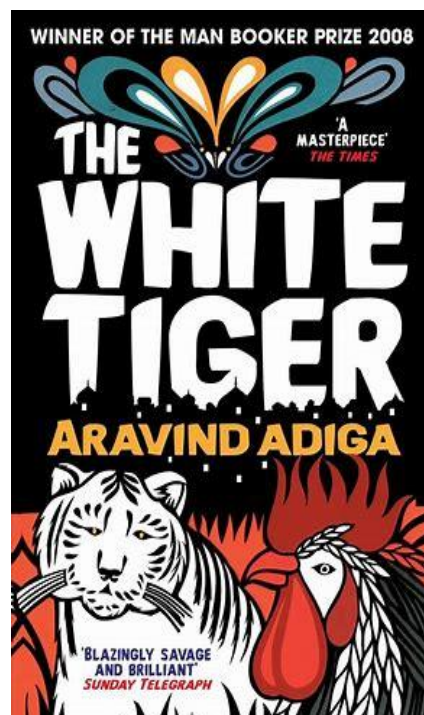
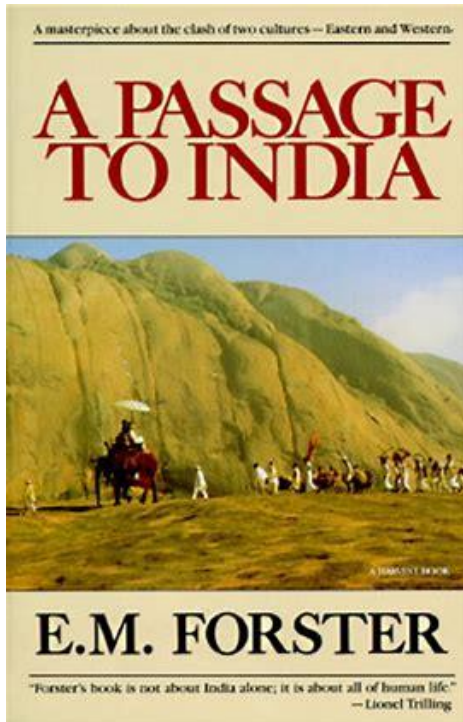


Three Novels

A Passage to India (1924)

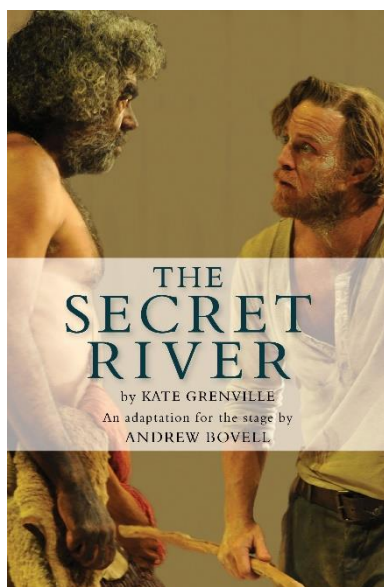
The White Tiger (2008)

Brooklyn (2009)



One Play

The Secret River (2013)



- adapted from the novel by Kate Grenville
- successful and critically acclaimed performances
- adapted as a television series

Part 4 Overview of Prescribed Texts

Novels of India: Context

<p><i>A Passage to India</i> EM Forster British East India Company 1757 - 1858 British Raj 1858 - 1947</p>	<p><i>The White Tiger</i> – Arvind Adiga Post-Independence 1947 - 2008</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ India’s population colonised: politically, militarily, culturally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Myth of “benefits of colonisation” eg English language, railways, banning of barbarism (sutee) ▪ Theft and exploitation of resources ▪ Cheap labour ▪ Eurocentric prejudice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Slumdog</i>-era (‘Jai Ho!’ 2009 national election campaign; theme song from <i>Slumdog Millionaire</i>) • BRICS nation – rapidly expanding economy • globalisation – myth of benefits • rural-urban divide • myth of the ‘middle class’

Enquiry Question

Can you identify similarities with the contexts for the other prescribed texts?

- British empire
- Non-European colonies
- Transportation and convicts
- Post-colonial rejection or embrace of imperial heritage

A Passage to India

Look closely at this quote:

“The triumphant machine of civilization may suddenly hitch and be immobilized into a car of stone, and at such moments the destiny of the English seems to resemble their predecessors’, who also entered the country with intent to refashion it, but were in the end worked into its pattern and covered with its dust.” Narrator, Chapter 24

Novels of India: Enquiry Questions

- what were the aims of empire? Did these succeed in India?**

- How are concepts of civilisation, empire, nationalism and possession of place represented in your exploration of homelands?**

PAUSE for direction: if many students have studied this novel, we will continue discussion. Otherwise, let’s sail down the Ganges towards our discussion of The White Tiger.

The White Tiger

Look closely at the opening line of the novel: “From the desk of...”

Enquiry Questions

- How does this phrase initiate our exploration of homelands?
- In what ways does this humorous opening reveal a microcosm for the unfolding narrative about:
 - reconfigured identity (form of the novel: cyclical, epistolary)
 - voice (form of the novel: satire and humour)
 - ways of reclaiming power (desk – metonym for bureaucracy)
 - redefined environment
 - self-imposed exile

Brooklyn (context)

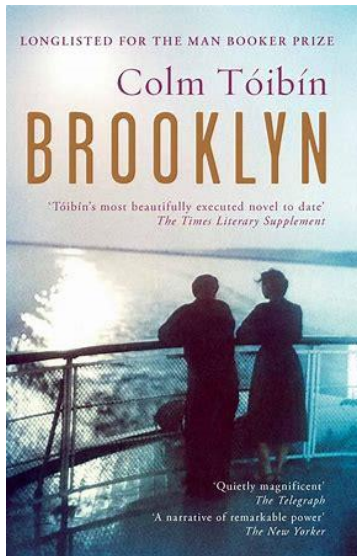
a novel of Ireland, or America?



Logo of Enniscorthy Tourism website

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ 20th century legacy of centuries of British colonialism in Ireland ❑ language: Irish speaking English ❑ political invisibility of the novel, different gender expectations for Irish women ❑ Continual Irish emigration to England and America ❑ “Celtic Tiger” 21st century economic renaissance readership for <i>Brooklyn</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NYC as the destination for mass emigration ○ NYC: shelter for Irish migrants since Great Famine 1840s ○ American prosperity built on immigrant labour ○ America, the multicultural melting pot: absorption of race, ethnicity, culture ○ economic emigration

Brooklyn: Structure (post-departure)



Before her second encounter with Mrs Kelly, Eilis's new life in Brooklyn is disturbed by her sister's death.

Her initial response to the terrible news is associated with departure, homeland and place:

"Why did I ever come over here?"

(the rhetorical question is then repeated)

and

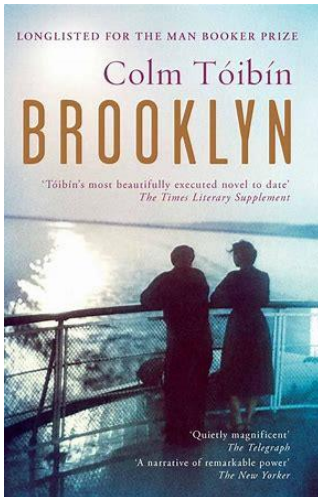
"I wish I had never come over here."

(the statement is repeated.)

Enquiry Questions

- ❑ Consider why the character's emotions are linked so closely to her experience of "here". That is, what does it mean for her to be "here", as opposed to "there"?

- ❑ Similarly to Kishan and Balram in *The White Tiger*, Eilis and her late sister are linked by the need for economic security. How are sacrifice and family aspects of an individual's relationship with their homeland?



Brooklyn: Structure (return and departure)

Mrs Kelly: “You can fool most people, but you can’t fool me.”

Enquiry Questions

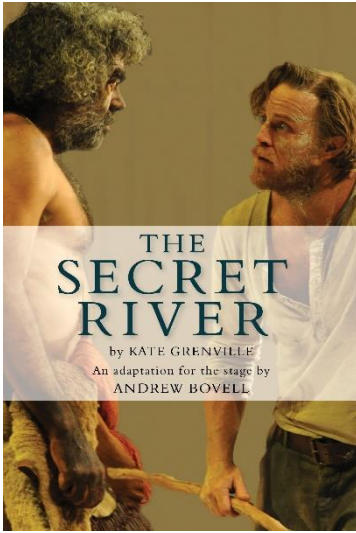
- Describe why this encounter proves to be a crucial moment of exposure.

- Refer to the earlier encounter with Mrs Kelly about “too much talk” – consider whether there is hypocrisy in her values and attitude.

- Eilis departs the encounter “shaking”. Has she been intentionally trying to “fool” people? Who has she really ‘fooled’ – and what was among the reasons for this trickery?

Also: “The world, as the man says, is a very small place.” Mrs Kelly

- look at how technology (telephone as symbol, ship as getaway vehicle) bridges the distance between Eilis’ two homelands.



The Secret River

Context early 1800s NSW

Transportation – the British, convict experience of exile

Dispossession – the indigenous experience of genocide and displacement

This powerful tragic drama is staged through clashing symbols but also evocative language inscribed through narration and staged directions.

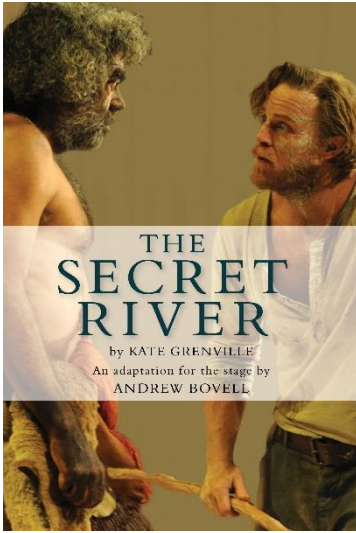
Example of paired symbols:

Innocuous fish in “Little fishy” song and ‘Banilung’, the snapper in the Dharugs’ call to country song. (Act One, scene 13.)

Enquiry Questions

- Identify at least two more pairings of powerful symbols which appear on stage.

- Consider and explain how these diametrically opposed objects function on stage to show the clash of two cultures (and their associated values and attitudes to place.)



The Secret River

Characterisation

Thornhill and Yalamundi:

both are pictured in confrontation on the cover of the published script, to indicate the material and intangible barriers between them.

Consider the spectrum of antipathy towards their indigenous neighbours. Between Thornhill, we have Blackwood and Smasher Sullivan at either end of a spectrum which reflects attitudes and values towards the land and its inhabitants.

Sal, Buriya and Dulla Dyin:

the women's experience of colonialism is depicted differently to their male counterparts. How is their voice or agency silenced?

Enquiry Questions

- How does Thornhill's transformation reflect the settlers' response to their indigenous neighbours?

- Consider and explain why Sal's view of homeland is completely different from that of her husband.



Brick Lane (context)

a British Film with a South Asian history

Pakistan, 20 th century	Britain, 21 st century
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> British colonial control over South Asia <input type="checkbox"/> language: South Asian languages grafted onto English <input type="checkbox"/> different gender expectations for South Asian women <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty <input type="checkbox"/> Religious and cultural homogeneity <input type="checkbox"/> Political repression and corruption: the Bhutto-era 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ British prosperity reliant on immigrant labour ○ London, the multicultural melting pot: absorption of race, ethnicity, culture ○ Post-9/11 audience aware of Islamophobia ○ South Asian migration to England from former colonies ○ Religious and cultural diversity ○ Political rights and activism

Brick Lane

Exile or Opportunity

Consider how family and sacrifice are linked and present in this film. Similarly to the estranged brothers in *The White Tiger*, and the separated sisters in *Brooklyn*, *Brick Lane* also explores how siblings are parted by the lure of migration.

Identity

Enquiry Questions

- How is the love of family and the love of homeland linked?



- In what ways does Nazneem express her yearning to reconnect with her homeland?

Brick Lane

Reconnecting

❑ “Pride won’t buy us tickets home.”

Consider the links between poverty and the disrupted connections with homeland. Why are women in ‘Brick Lane’ disadvantaged in their capacity to reconnect with home?

(describe a key scene)



❑ “Once there was a princess who lived 7 seas and 13 rivers away”...

Consider the significance of the folk tale narrative as an analogy or allegory for the separation from homeland in this film.

Part 5: Related Texts

Choosing your Related Texts

Criteria

- Diverse text types suggested
Novel, short story, poem, painting or artwork, film
- Recommended: **nonfiction, nonfiction, nonfiction!**
Why? There are no nonfiction texts on the list of prescribed texts.
essay, feature article, opinion piece, memoir, creative nonfiction,
social history, novella
- Add an element to the given question, as a way of framing, affirming and directing the question
- Study a range of texts: two are required, better to read widely and encounter more possibilities
- Know the context very well for your related text: original and received context: political, historical, social.

Enquiry Question

- How did you decide on your choice of related texts?
- What are your related text choices, how do they differ from the prescribed texts?



Sample Related Text: *Tigertail*

Tigertail (2020) Dir. Alan Yang

Responds to many elements of the rubric:

Marginalisation, culturally complex relationships with place, representation of place and language

Place: Taiwan and America, migrant story

Time: inter-generational drama

Voice and perspectives: parallel family stories set in the past and present

Key images/scenes:

- prologue (childhood)
- departure from Taiwan, view from the taxi
- symbolic images: the record player, Otis Redding records
- key scene: reunion in shopping mall
- Final image: father and daughter, framed by structure of protagonist's childhood home

Sample Essay Questions

SBHS Assessment Task 2020

Individuals who explore a new vision of their homeland risk conflict with their community's collective connections to place.

Craft an essay which responds to this idea. Your essay must feature at least two texts set for study and one related text.

SBHS Trial Examination Question 2020

The disruption of an individual's relationship with place is expressed in their changed values or attitudes.

Evaluate this statement through an examination of TWO prescribed texts and AT LEAST TWO related texts.

- END -