



SELECTIONS FROM VCE SEASON OF EXCELLENCE

VCAA Bulletin Supplement 3

VCE Literature Text list 2007

The following texts proposed by the Literature Text Selection Panel have been approved by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as suitable for study in 2007.

Criteria for text selection

Each text selected for the VCE Literature text list will:

- have literary merit and be worthy of close study
- be an excellent example of form and genre
- sustain intensive study, raising interesting issues and providing challenging ideas
- be appropriate for both male and female students
- be appropriate for the age and development of students and in that context reflect current community standards and expectations.

The text list as a whole will:

- be suitable for a wide range of students, including second language students
- reflect the cultural diversity of the Victorian community
- include a balance of new and established works.

Guidelines for text selection

The text list for VCE Literature is determined within the following guidelines:

1. Forty texts should be available for the School-assessed Coursework. (List A)
2. Thirty texts should be available for the examination. (List B)
3. The list must represent a range of forms, experiences and voices, as described in the study design.
4. Genres for List A must be represented in the following approximate numbers:
 - 10 Novels
 - 10 Performances
 - 8 Poetry
 - 6 Stories
 - 6 Other Literature

Genres for List B must be represented in the following approximate numbers:

- 9 Novels
- 9 Performances
- 6 Poetry
- 3 Stories
- 3 Other Literature

5. One third of the texts should be Australian.
6. Approximately 75% of the texts must be standard texts that would be expected to be familiar to most Literature teachers.
7. There must be no overlap with the VCE English text list.
8. **Full bibliographic details must be supplied where necessary.**

Note: While the VCAA considers all the texts on this list suitable for study, teachers should be aware that in some instances sensitivity may be needed where particular issues are raised in certain texts. In selecting texts for study teachers should make themselves aware of these issues prior to introducing the text to students.

The VCAA does not prescribe editions: any complete edition may be used. However, it should be noted that editions nominated for titles from List B are those from which the passages for the examination will be selected. The bibliographic information is provided to assist teachers to obtain texts and is correct, as far as possible, at the time of publication. Publishing details may change from time to time and teachers should consult the VCAA Bulletin regularly for any amendments or alterations to the list.

No specific editions or poems are nominated for poets from the List A list as the choice of poems is a teacher decision.

Key to codes

The bracketed numbers indicate the number of years in the current cycle that a text has appeared on the Literature text list: (1) for example, indicates that 2007 is the first year a text has appeared on the list.

Please note the change in annotation system: In previously published text lists this number indicated the number of years a text had appeared on the text list prior to the year of publication of the list. A book in its fourth year would therefore have been listed as (3), whereas under the new system will be listed as (4).

(A) This text meets The Australian requirement.

List A

Novels

- Buck, Pearl, *The Good Earth*, Washington Square Press, 2004 (1)
- Collins, Wilkie, *The Woman in White*, Penguin Classics, 2003 (3)
- Day, Gregory, *The Patron Saint of Eels*, Picador, 2005 (A) (1)
- Dickens, Charles, *David Copperfield*, Penguin Classics, 1996 (4)
- Fforde, Jasper, *The Eyre Affair*, Hodder & Stoughton, 2001 (3)
- Gaskell, Elizabeth, *North and South*, Penguin Classics, 1996 (2)

- Gibson, William, *Pattern Recognition*, Penguin, 2003 (3)
- Grenville, Kate, *The Idea of Perfection*, Picador, 2000 (A) (2)
- Leon, Donna, *Doctored Evidence*, Random House, 2004 (2)
- Scott, Kim, *Benang*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1999 (A) (3)

Plays, film or television mini-series

- Aristophanes, *The Birds in Four Plays by Aristophanes*, Penguin, 1994 (2)
- Bovell, Andrew, *Speaking in Tongues*, Currency Press, 1998 (A) (4)
- Brecht, Bertolt, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Methuen, 1994 (1)
- Casablanca* (Film) (Rating PG), (Available for borrowing from video rental stores and for purchase from Maxwell's Tel: (02) 9973 2277) (1)
- Far From Heaven* (Film) (Rating M) (Available for purchase from Maxwell's Tel: (02) 9973 2277) (3)
- Grave of the Fireflies* (DVD Animation) (Rating M) (Available for purchase from Maxwell's Tel: (02) 9973 2277) (2)
- Lawler, Ray, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, Currency Press, 1978 (A) (4)
- Nowra, Louis, *Radiance*, Currency Press, 2004 (The Playscript) (A) (1)
- Webster, John, *The White Devil*, Penguin Classics, 1973 (2)
- Wilde, Oscar, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, in *The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays*, Penguin Classics, 2000 (1)

Short stories

- Carey, Peter, *Collected Stories*, Vintage edition, Random House, 2005 (Replaces: *The Fat Man in History*, UQP, 1994 now out of print) (A) (3)
- Dick, Philip K, *Minority Report*, Gollancz, 2002 (2)
- Drewe, Robert (ed.), *The Penguin Book of the Beach*, Penguin, 2001 (A) (1)
- Hospital, Janette Turner, *North of Nowhere South of Loss*, UQP, 2003 (A) (3)
- Jolley, Elizabeth, *Woman in a Lampshade*, Penguin, 1992 (A) (4)
- Mears, Gillian, *A Map of the Gardens*, Picador, 2002 (A) (2)

Other literature

- Bayet-Charlton, Fabienne, *Finding Ullagundahi Island*, Allen & Unwin, 2002 (A) (3)
- Fuller, Alexandra, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, Picador, 2002 (3)
- Li, Cunxin, *Mao's Last Dancer*, Penguin, 2003 (A) (2)
- Pham, Andrew X, *Catfish and Mandala*, Flamingo, 2000 (4)
- Wolf, Virginia, *A Room of One's Own*, Penguin, 2000 (1)
- Wright, Judith, *Half a Lifetime*, Penguin, 2001 (A) (2)

Poetry

- Atwood, Margaret (3)
- Bishop, Elizabeth (3)
- Eliot, T S (2)
- Lawrence, Anthony, *Skinned by Light*, University of Queensland Press, 2002 (A) (1)
- Lowell, Robert, *Poems selected by Michael Hofmann*, Faber & Faber, 2001 (1)
- The Penguin Book of Modern Australian Poetry* (Ed Tranter & Mead), Penguin, 1991 (A) (4)
- Wordsworth, William (2)
- Wyatt, Thomas (2)

List B

Novels

- Austen, Jane, *Sense and Sensibility*, Penguin Classics, 2003 (3)
- Barker, Pat, *Regeneration*, Penguin, 1992 (1)
- de Kretser, Michelle, *The Hamilton Case*, Vintage, Random House, 2004 (A) (3)
- Doctorow, E L, *Ragtime*, Picador, 1985 (3)
- Fitzgerald, F Scott, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin, 2000 (3)
- Garner, Helen, *The Children's Bach*, Penguin, 1999 (A) (3)
- James, Henry, *Washington Square*, Penguin Classics, 1986 (2)
- McGahan, Andrew, *The White Earth*, Allen & Unwin, 2004 (A) (1)
- Patchett, Ann, *Bel Canto*, Fourth Estate, 2002 (3)

Plays

- Chekov, Anton, *Three Sisters*, translated by Peter Carson, Penguin, 2002 (2)
- Ibsen, Henrik, 'Hedda Gabler', in *Hedda Gabler and Other Plays*, Penguin, 1961 (1)
- Murray-Smith, Joanna, *Honour*, Currency Press, 2006 (A) (2)
(Note: The 1997 edition differs significantly from the 2006 edition and should not be used.)
- Rayson, Hannie, *Hotel Sorrento*, Currency Press, 2002 (A) (1)
- Reza, Yasmina, 'Art', Faber & Faber, 1997 (2)
- Shakespeare, William, *King Lear*, Penguin, 2005 (3) (The Penguin 1999 edition is out of print. Passages for examination will be chosen from the 2005 edition.)
- Shakespeare, William, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Penguin Shakespeare Series, 2005 (1)
- Sophocles, *Antigone*, translated by E F Watling in *The Theban Plays*, Penguin, 2004 (1)
- Thomas, Dylan, *Under Milk Wood*, Penguin Modern Classics, 2000 (2)

Short stories

- Astley, Thea, *Hunting the Wild Pineapple*, Penguin, 1981 (A) (2)
- Byatt, A S, *Sugar & Other Stories*, Vintage, 1995 (1)
- Carver, Raymond, *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?* Vintage, 2003 (3)
- (The stories for study are: 'Fat', 'Neighbors', 'They're Not Your Husband', 'The Father', 'Nobody Said Anything', 'Sixty Acres', 'Jerry and Molly and Sam', 'How about This?', 'Bicycles, Muscles, Cigarettes', 'Signals', 'Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?')

Other literature (3)

- Dalrymple, William, *City of Djinn*s, Harper Perennial, 2005 (4)
- McGirr, Michael, *Bypass: The Story of a Road*, Pan Macmillan, 2005 (A) (1)
- Modjeska, Drusilla, *Timepieces*, Picador, 2002 (A) (3)

Poetry

- Note:**
1. Each poem listed for a poet must be studied
 2. Teachers should note that in the case of longer poems, extracts from the poem may be used in the examination.

Adamson, Robert, *Mulberry Leaves, Paper Bark Press, 2001 (A) (3)*

- The cow bird
Domestic shuffle
Fathers' Day
Mulberry leaves
Goshawk over Broken Bay
Berowra Waters
My fishing boat
Growing up alone
The channels
Wild colonial boys
The language of oysters
The gathering light
Drum of fire
After Brett Whiteley

Auden, W H, *Selected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson, Faber & Faber, 1979 (2)

- This lunar beauty
To ask the hard question is simple
Look, stranger, at this island now
Lay your sleeping head, my love
Musée des Beaux Arts
In Memory of W.B. Yeats
The Unknown Citizen
September 1, 1939
Law, say the gardeners, is the sun
Lady, weeping at the crossroads
In Praise of Limestone
Under Sirius
The Shield of Achilles
The More Loving One

Donne, John, *Selected Poetry*, Oxford World's Classics, 1996 (2)

- From The Satires 3 [Kind pity chokes my spleen]
The Good Morrow
The Relic
The Flea
The Canonization
The Sun Rising
Song (First line: *Sweetest love, I do not go*)
The Anniversary
To his Mistress Going to Bed
A Valediction: forbidding Mourning
From the Elegies: His Picture
From the Divine poems:
 - Holy Sonnets:
 - At the round earth's imagined corners
Death be not proud
 - A Hymn to Christ
 - Hymn to God my God, in my Sickness

Kinsella, John, *Peripheral Light: Selected and New Poems*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2003 (A) (2)

- Links
Inland
Wheatbelt Gothic or Discovering a Wyeth
The Silo
Fog
Goading Storms Out of a Darkening Field

Wild Radishes
Drowning in Wheat
The Machine of the Twentieth Century Rolls Through the
High-Yielding Crop
First Essay on Linguistic Disobedience
The Shed
Salt Lesson
Cold

Philip Larkin, *Collected Poems*, The Marvell Press and Faber & Faber, 2003 (1)

Poetry of Departures
Mr Bleaney
Love Songs in Age
Home is so Sad
The Whitsun Weddings
MCMXIV
Ambulances
The Arundel Tomb
The Explosion
Aubade

Wright, Judith, *Collected Poems*, HarperCollins, 1994 (A) (3)

South of My Days
The Company of Lovers
Age to Youth
Double Image
Eve to Her Daughters
Fire Sermon
Some Words
Tightropes
The Dark Ones
Smalltown Dance
Woman to Man
Woman to Child

Annotations of texts new to the Literature List 2007

These annotations of texts new to the Literature list in 2007 are provided to assist teachers with text selection. The comments are not intended to represent the only possible interpretation or a favoured reading of a text; nor do they represent the view of the VCAA. The list is arranged alphabetically by author or poet. Films are listed by title.

Barker, Pat, *Regeneration*, Penguin, 1992

Regeneration is based on events that took place in 1917 when poet Siegfried Sassoon published his declaration against the war. To avoid scandal, the Army declared him to be suffering from 'shell shock' (now known as post-traumatic stress disorder) and sent him to Craiglockhart Hospital in Scotland. At Craiglockhart, Sassoon befriended Wilfred Owen and Dr William Rivers, the psychiatrist and anthropologist who was endeavouring to treat patients using Freud's analytical approach. *Regeneration* is a profoundly anti-war novel that deals with the damage caused by warfare and the process of recovery, rather than with the details of combat.

Brecht, Bertolt, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Methuen, 1994

One of Brecht's 'Parables for the Theatre', this play abandons the traditional principles of unity of time and place, constructing a series of loosely-connected and parallel scenes with simple dialogue, highly stylised acting and many songs that offer an oblique commentary on the action. Brecht's 'epic theatre' rejects the idea that drama should attempt to create an illusion of reality. Through intertwining stories, a central idea is played out. Who shall have the land? Who shall have the child? The judge, Azdak, must determine whether it is to be the former servant girl who has nurtured the child or the child's true mother, the wife of the former governor, who formerly abandoned him but now claims him. While suitable for most outcomes, this text would in particular offer opportunities for teachers and students to explore Unit 3 Outcome 2 *Views, Values and Contexts* and Unit 3 Outcome 3, *Considering Alternative Viewpoints*.

Buck, Pearl, S, *The Good Earth*, Washington Square Press, 2004

Written in 1931, this classic novel explores the lives of ordinary people in pre-revolutionary China. It won the Pulitzer Prize and its author later was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938. The narrative traces the life of the farmer, Wang Lung, from his marriage to the placid and loyal O-lan, through the expansion of his lands, the births of his children, the years of plenty and the years of drought. It is told in the fashion of a parable, with an underlying reverence for the importance of one's land and responsibility for family. In the distant background of the novel, the signs of political change can be observed. This novel is written in a very accessible manner, although with a complexity of feeling that belies its simplicity. With an excellent film version available (1937) it would lend itself to Unit 3 Outcome 1 *Adaptations and Transformations* or to Unit 3 Outcome 2 *Views, Values and Contexts*.

Byatt, A S, *Sugar & Other Stories*, Vintage, 1995

This is A.S.Byatt's first collection of short stories. In them, she continues to explore her love of literature and the plight of the marginalised. Although sometimes demanding, her philosophical deliberations furnish the reader with insights that enhance understanding of the workings of the human mind. Each story is uniquely enthralling. Often told from the viewpoint of middle-aged women and, in several stories, incorporating elements of magical realism, this is a collection that will stimulate a great deal of discussion.

Casablanca

Casablanca is a love story and political thriller, starring Bogart and Bergman. A Hollywood movie made during wartime conditions in 1941, and set in the chaos of North West Africa, the film depicts a world which contrasts the glamour of pre-war Europe with the chaotic changes brought by war. The black-market flourishes and displaced people wait endlessly for the opportunity to travel to the 'free world'. The key Nazi and Resistance characters represent a divided Europe. *Casablanca* is one of the most quoted films in cinema history and provides many avenues for possible study.

Day, Gregory, *The Patron Saint of Eels*, Picador, 2005 (A)

When Noel Lea wakes one morning to find Eels filling the gutters outside his house, he wonders if they have miraculously fallen from the sky. The people of the fictitious Victorian town of Mangowak enthusiastically begin digging out their old eel recipes, the children entertain themselves poking at the slippery creatures that wriggle in the ditches and Lea's city-born neighbour puzzles over the best approach to skinning an eel. This modern fable is a tale of life in small country towns and an Italian saint, Fra Ionio, who decides to shift his interests when, after World War II, most of the population of the village he originally came from migrate to Australia. While initially there to take care of the Eels, Fra Ionio also takes the time to show the people of Mangowak the importance of embracing life. *The Patron Saint of Eels* is a first novel by Victorian writer Gregory Day. Based loosely on events told to him by his father about the day eels overran their Great Ocean Road town, Day mythologised the tale his father told him to produce this beautifully-crafted story. This is a delightful and humorous tale about country towns, the changing face of Australian communities, small miracles and of course, eels.

Drewe, Robert (ed.), *The Penguin Book of the Beach*, Penguin, 2001 (A)

'In Australia people always run to the coast' (Robert Drewe's *Radiant Heat*). Perhaps this is also what draws readers towards this fascinating collection of beach stories. From editor Robert Drewe's autobiographical tales of drowned children and childhood to Ian McEwan's *Last Days of Summer*, *The Penguin Book of the Beach* offers students an opportunity to explore not only the vivid images of sun and sand through the eyes of some of the world's great writers, but also the people and emotions that go hand in hand with them. The water often serves as a metaphor for human experience. The carefully selected range offers the opportunity for a variety of interpretations and insights, as well as providing humour. The collection includes writers such as John Cheever, Tim Winton, Italo Calvino, David Malouf and Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

Ibsen, Henrik, *Hedda Gabler*, in *Hedda Gabler and Other Plays*, Penguin, 1961

When Oscar Wilde first saw *Hedda Gabler* in 1890 (the year it was first performed), he said, 'I felt pity and terror, as though the play had been Greek.' A 'psychological thriller', Ibsen's play explores the alienating pressures of a conservative and patriarchal society on a woman who internalises these pressures and manipulates others, but ultimately turns them upon herself. Constrained by gender as well as her own inhibited and self-absorbed personality, the 29-year-old Hedda Gabler has self-destructively and carelessly married a pedantic scholar, but craves the exciting life which she can only live vicariously. Presided over by the portrait of her father, who watches from beyond the grave, her only glimpses of the outside world are risqué conversations which she has with Judge Brack, a cynical and sinister visitor to the house. The appearance of an old school friend who is the assistant to Hedda's ex-lover leads to complications that explore jealousy, creativity, the nature of freedom and the heroic life, as well as the relationship between melodrama and tragedy.

Larkin, Philip, *Collected Poems*, The Marvell Press and Faber & Faber, 2003

Long before the culture of complaint and the anxiety of entitlement, there was Philip Larkin, the truly great complainer of modern English poetry. His voice ranges from an ironic conservatism to a prophetic bitterness. It can be irreverently witty and occasionally provocative. He seems almost to celebrate a greener bygone era but, more accurately, he laments the encroachment into almost everything from landscape to love of the mechanised, industrial, mundane, uniform sameness of the modern world. In Larkin's poetry cut grass lies frail, loneliness clarifies and the fields and farms are forever giving way to the cut-price crowds at shopping centres and the eternal grey of asphalt.

Lawrence, Anthony, *Skinned by Light*, University of Queensland Press, 2002 (A)

Obtaining the Colin Roderick Award in 2000 and short listed by the Foundation for Australian Literary Studies, Townsville, Anthony Lawrence's collection of new and selected poetry deserves the universal praise it has attracted. With its poignant observation and ability to evoke the quintessential Australian landscape, his poetry resonates with sometimes surprising but always memorable imagery. Lawrence writes about nature *to define my life*. His is a landscape *veined with humanity, flora, fauna, what's imagined and what's experienced*. (Anthony Lawrence, in an interview with John Kinsella, in *Thylazine*).

Lowell, Robert, *Poems selected by Michael Hofmann*, Faber & Faber, 2001

Born in Boston in 1917, becoming a conscientious objector during the Second World War and an opponent of the Vietnam War, Robert Lowell could be characterised as the American poet of the American century. His career as a writer began with a strict adherence to the formal traditional structures and strictures of metre and rhyme but during the 1950s and 1960s he reflected the influence on his writing of both the younger Beat Generation poets and his own struggle with mental illness in a more relaxed style and a much more overtly personal and confessional subject matter. In some of his most famous poems the historical becomes the personal, the worldview and the individual seem undivided; a polemic and poetic stance that we might take for granted today but which was ground once broken by Lowell and his contemporaries.

McGahan, Andrew, *The White Earth*, Allen & Unwin, 2004 (A)

Winner of the 2005 Miles Franklin Award, and described on the cover as a 'haunting, disturbing and cautionary tale', McGahan's fourth novel is set in a fictionalised area of the Darling Downs. It is about ownership, inheritance and invasion of land. Its central characters, apart from the land itself, are a young boy, William, whose father died in a farming accident some months before the novel's main events, and his embittered great-uncle, John McIvor. Against a background of the real fight for Native Title in the early 1990s and the occasionally extreme reactions that accompanied that debate, William's struggle to understand what drives his uncle leads him to some disturbing discoveries about both past and present. The prose is elegant and polished; a very good text for close analysis and for the examination task.

McGirr, Michael, *Bypass: The Story of a Road*, Pan Macmillan, 2005 (A)

In late 2001, Michael McGirr, newly-departed from the Jesuit priesthood, set off to ride a bicycle the length of the Hume Highway from Sydney to Melbourne. It is a journey of highway, byway and freeway, tracing the life of the road in its modern, fast-paced incarnation and discovering some of the out of the way haunts that reflect its history. Although readily accessible to a range of readers, this book defies narrow categorization: part travelogue, part historical anecdote, part reflection and social commentary and part the story of a developing love relationship, it changes gear as often as the bicycle. It is written with affection, wry humour and insight into contemporary Australian life.

Nowra, Louis, *Radiance*, Currency Press, 2004 (The Playscript) (A)

Three sisters who have fashioned very different lives for themselves are reunited in their North Queensland home following their mother's death. Unresolved conflicts and tensions between the three erupt on the surface as Nowra explores their often bitter relationships, frustrations and unfulfilled dreams. The resultant climax is surprising, but does offer the sisters some closure to their past and some hope of resolution. The play is essentially a character study, but one which also opens up questions of place and belonging.

Rayson, Hannie, *Hotel Sorrento*, Currency Press, 2002 (A)

Hotel Sorrento was first performed in 1991, winning a number of awards for best new play. The familiarity of its local setting and colour make it readily accessible for students. The sometimes bitter and difficult conflicts between the members of the Moynihan family, their various friends and partners are deftly displayed by Rayson. Resentments from the past return to plague the present; the play lays bare the emotional scars of a family still coming to terms with past divisions and present jealousies. This would be an excellent text for use in the Views, Values and Contexts, and Creative Response Outcomes as well as offering plenty of scope for close analysis and the exam task.

Shakespeare, William, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Penguin Shakespeare Series, 2005

One of Shakespeare's later comedies, *Much Ado About Nothing* explores relationships more deeply than earlier comedies. The main character, Beatrice, is a clever woman who slightly terrifies others with her sharpness. She is unusual for Shakespeare's times for the equality she demands for herself and especially for her wit and intellect. She and the young bachelor from Padua, Benedick, constantly tease and abuse each other in sharp-witted language. The verbal jousting that goes on between them provides some of the most entertaining scenes in the play. They are the stars of the play and are contrasted with the more conventional couple, Claudio and Hero. Shakespeare makes the story of 'true love' into the secondary plot, and concentrates on the more

interesting, sophisticated lovers whose relationship is more complicated. The study of this play provides an opportunity to look at the way one of Shakespeare's 'women of words' is used to challenge conventions of the time. It also explores the relationship between the sexes with relevance for today. The language is replete with insults, slang and colloquialism as the two lovers battle it out to be wittier and more clever than the other. Although there is a happy ending, 'what's to come is still unsure ...' there is a melancholy element and the lovers must overcome obstacles to love.

Sophocles, *Antigone*, translated by E F Watling in *The Theban Plays*, Penguin, 2004

The tragedy begins after the Theban victory and Creon's decree that the body of a traitor, Antigone's brother, be denied burial. Antigone defies the decree and faces the death penalty. The play explores the nature of leadership and despotism, and the conflict faced by Antigone who has to choose whether to obey the laws of the state, or family obligation and the divine law which required her to bury her brother.

Wilde, Oscar, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, in *The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays*, Penguin Classics, 2000

In an interview before the first production (1895) of *The Importance of Being Earnest* Oscar Wilde said: '[The play] has its philosophy ... that we should treat all the trivial things seriously, and the serious things in life with sincere and studied triviality.' Scintillatingly witty, this highly stylized comedy of manners is indeed concerned with serious issues, philosophical, moral and social: existentialism, the nature of the irrational, education, the position of women, snobbery and the policing of class hierarchies, and the delightful absurdity of romance. At the heart of this farce of identity, with its charmingly ridiculous plot which hinges on a baby absent-mindedly being left in a handbag, there is a satiric exposé of the disparity between aristocratic 'manners' and the quite ruthless materialism of this stratum of society. Comic absurdity goes hand in hand with a real sense of the human potential for cruelty, but the message of the play is always resilient and optimistic, rather than bleak.

Woolf, Virginia, *A Room of One's Own*, Penguin, 2000

Based on a lecture she gave in 1928 about women writers, *A Room of One's Own* is Virginia Woolf's answer to the question *why have there been so few female writers?* The anonymous narrator, who is a thinly-disguised Woolf, visits a fictional university called Oxbridge. Here she delivers a lecture on obstacles that have inhibited women writers, drawing examples from the work of many writers, both male and female. She concludes that most literature has been written by men for their own purposes. Women writers have been held back by their poverty, their family obligations and lack of privacy. All that is needed for women's true talents to emerge is real independence, 500 pounds a year and a room of one's own.

Notes



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