**Teacher/Subject Coordinator Contact:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joel Guye</td>
<td><a href="mailto:guye.joel.d@edumail.vic.gov.au">guye.joel.d@edumail.vic.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Maunder</td>
<td><a href="mailto:maunder.heather.h@edumail.vic.gov.au">maunder.heather.h@edumail.vic.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Holiday Homework Required:**

1. Read ALL of the Texts
2. Complete the Holiday Homework Booklet

**Recommended Work:**

1. Read Biographies on each Author
2. Watch YouTube Videos of readings of the poems and texts, and of performances of Agamemnon.

**Resources Required for Subject:**

1. The Texts
2. Google
3. YouTube
4. Pens and Paper

**Key Links:**

- Past exams and examiner reports

**Additional Resources:**

- Text Book, VATE Perspectives, Insight on Texts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEXT LIST 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature for Senior Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agamemnon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Baron in the Trees”, in Our Ancestors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart of Darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Roots</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opened Ground</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* VCAA has set the list of short stories and poems for study. Check the web site for details.
Unit 3: Form and transformation

In this unit students consider how the form of a text affects meaning, and how writers construct their texts. They investigate ways writers adapt and transform texts and how meaning is affected as texts are adapted and transformed. They consider how the perspectives of those adapting texts may inform or influence the adaptations. Students draw on their study of adaptations and transformations to develop creative responses to texts. Students develop their skills in communicating ideas in both written and oral forms.

Area of study 1  Adaptations and transformations

Text for Study:  
*Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad

In this area of study students focus on how the form of text contributes to the meaning of the text. Students develop an understanding of the typical features of a particular form of text and how the conventions associated with it are used, such as the use of imagery and rhythm in a poem or the use of setting, plot and narrative voice in a novel. Students use this understanding to reflect upon the extent to which changing the form of the text affects its meaning. By exploring adaptations, students also consider how creators of adaptations may emphasise or understate perspectives, assumptions and ideas in their presentation of a text.

Outcome 1 On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the extent to which meaning changes when a text is adapted to a different form.

Area of study 2  Creative responses to texts

Text for Study:  
*Dark Roots* by Cate Kennedy

In this area of study students focus on the imaginative techniques used for creating and recreating a literary work. Students use their knowledge of how the meaning of texts can change as form changes to construct their own creative transformations of texts. They learn how writers develop images of people and places, and they develop an understanding of language, voice, form and structure. Students draw inferences from the original text and speculate about the writer’s purpose. In their adaptation of the tone and the style of the original text, students develop an understanding of the concerns and attitudes explored. Students develop an understanding of the various ways in which authors craft texts. They reflect critically upon their own responses as they relate to the text, and discuss the purpose and context of their creations.

Outcome 2 On completion of this unit the student should be able to respond creatively to a text and comment on the connections between the text and the response.
UNIT 4: Interpreting texts

In this unit students develop critical and analytic responses to texts. They consider the context of their responses to texts as well as the ideas explored in the texts, the style of the language and points of view. They investigate literary criticism informing both the reading and writing of texts. Students develop an informed and sustained interpretation supported by close textual analysis. For the purposes of this unit, literary criticism is characterised by extended, informed and substantiated views on texts and may include reviews, peer-reviewed articles and transcripts of speeches. Specifically, for Unit 4 Outcome 1, the literary criticism selected must reflect different perspectives, assumptions and ideas about the views and values of the text/s studied.

Area of study 1 Literary perspectives

Text for Study: *The Baron in the Trees* by Italo Calvino

In this area of study students focus on how different readings of texts may reflect the views and values of both writer and reader. Students consider the ways in which various interpretations of texts can contribute to understanding. They compare and analyse two pieces of literary criticism reflecting different perspectives, assumptions and ideas about the views and values of the text studied. Students identify the issues, ideas and contexts writers choose to explore, the way these are represented in the text/s and the cultural, social, historical and ideological contexts in which they were created. Students enquire into the ways readers may arrive at differing interpretations about a text and the grounds on which they are developed. Through close attention to two pieces of literary criticism reflecting different perspectives, students develop their own response to a text.

**Outcome 1** On completion of this unit students should be able to produce an interpretation of a text using different literary perspectives to inform their view.

Area of Study 2 Close analysis

Texts for Study: *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus and *Opened Ground* by Seamus Heaney

In this area of study students focus on detailed scrutiny of the language, style, concerns and construction of texts. Students attend closely to textual details to examine the ways specific features and/or passages in a text contributes to their overall interpretations. Students consider features of texts including structure, context, ideas, images, characters and situations, and the language in which these are expressed. They develop their interpretations using detailed reference to the text, logical sequencing of ideas and persuasive language.

**Outcome 2** On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse features of texts and develop and justify interpretations of texts.
Assessment

The student’s level of achievement for will be determined by school assessed coursework and an end-of-year exam.

School assessed coursework for Unit 3 will contribute 25 percent to the study score.

School assessed coursework for Unit 4 will contribute 25 percent to the study score.

The level of achievement for Units 3 & 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination which will contribute 50 percent to the study score.

Written examination

- Students must not write on the same text twice
- Students must not write on two texts of the same genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>October/November (on a date to be published annually by the VCAA)</th>
<th>Written examination</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Task A — Literary perspectives</strong> Assessment will be based on a written response to a statement related to one selected text from the Literature Text List published annually by the VCAA.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Reading time: 15 minutes Writing time: 2 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Task B — Close analysis</strong> Assessment will be based on a written response to passages from one selected text from the Literature Text List published annually by the VCAA.</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Total examination score</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Unit 3: Year 12 Literature - Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>Class content</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Homework &amp; Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Orientation</td>
<td>Orientation - Cate Kennedy “Dark Roots”</td>
<td>OUTCOME 2: Respond Creatively to and comment on the connections between the text and the response.</td>
<td>Homework due at or before the beginning of class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dark Roots</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dark Roots</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Dark Roots</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dark Roots: Creative Response 1 Dark Roots: Creative Response 2</td>
<td>CREATIVE RESPONSE SAC CREATIVE RESPONSE SAC</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dark Roots: Creative Response 3 Dark Roots: Creative Response 4</td>
<td>CREATIVE RESPONSE SAC CREATIVE RESPONSE SAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Labour day</td>
<td>Soiree Week</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oral Presentation of Creative Response: 1. Analysis/Links 2. Reflection on Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Joseph Conrad “Heart of Darkness” Heart of Darkness</td>
<td>OUTCOME 1: Analyse the extent to which meaning changes when a text is adapted to a different form.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Heart of Darkness Heart of Darkness</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HOLIDAY</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Easter Monday April 17 – 21</td>
<td>Heart of Darkness Heart of Darkness</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Anzac Day April 24 – 28</td>
<td>Heart of Darkness Heart of Darkness</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Heart of Darkness – Interpretative Essay</td>
<td>Students will view the Film version of Heart of Darkness in class.</td>
<td>H.O.D – Interpretation Practice SAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Heart of Darkness – FILM (1993)</td>
<td>H.O.D – Adaptations SAC</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Exam Preparation Exam Preparation</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAT week Queen’s birthday June 12 - 16</td>
<td>Mid-Year Literature Practice exam June 13th</td>
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</table>
## Unit 4: Year 12 Literature – Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>Class content</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Homework &amp; Assessment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>June 19 - 23</td>
<td><strong>Aeschylus “Agamemnon”</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Aeschylus “Agamemnon”</td>
<td><strong>OUTCOME 2</strong>: Analyse Features of texts and develop and justify interpretations of texts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>June 26 - 30</td>
<td>Aeschylus “Agamemnon”</td>
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<td>Aeschylus “Agamemnon”</td>
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<td><strong>HOLIDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>AGAMEMNON</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>July 17 - 21</td>
<td>Aeschylus “Agamemnon”</td>
<td><strong>AGAMEMNON – Close Analysis PRAC SAC</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Aeschylus “Agamemnon”</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>July 24 – 28</td>
<td>Aeschylus “Agamemnon”</td>
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<td>Aeschylus “Agamemnon”</td>
<td><strong>AGAMEMNON SAC</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>July 31 – Aug 4</td>
<td><strong>Italo Calvino “The Baron in the Trees”</strong></td>
<td><strong>OUTCOME 1</strong>: Produce an interpretation of a text using different literary perspectives to inform their view.</td>
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<td>The Baron in the Trees</td>
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<td><strong>BARON IN THE TREES –SAC</strong></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Aug 7 - 11</td>
<td>The Baron in the Trees</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Aug 14 - 18</td>
<td>The Baron in the Trees</td>
<td><strong>Baron in the Trees – Literary Perspectives PRAC SAC</strong></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Aug 21 - 25</td>
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<td>The Baron in the Trees</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Aug 28 – Sep 1</td>
<td><strong>Seamus Heaney “Opened Ground”</strong></td>
<td><strong>OUTCOME 2</strong>: Analyse Features of texts and develop and justify interpretations of texts.</td>
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<td>Opened Ground</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Sep 4 – 8</td>
<td>Opened Ground</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sep 11 – 15</td>
<td>Opened Ground</td>
<td><strong>OPENED GROUND – Close Analysis PRAC SAC</strong></td>
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<td>Opened Ground</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Sep 18 - 22</td>
<td>Opened Ground</td>
<td><strong>OPENED GROUND SAC</strong></td>
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<td>Opened Ground</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HOLIDAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>EXAM PREPARATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Oct 9 - 13</td>
<td>Literature practice exam June 11th Oct</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Oct 16 -20</td>
<td>EXAM PREPARATION</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Oct 23 - 27</td>
<td>EXAM PREPARATION</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A writer, Eudora Welty insisted, must know her characters’ “hearts and minds before they ever set visible foot on stage. You must know all, then not tell it all, or not tell too much at once: simply the right thing at the right moment.” When fiction doles out its revelations in this way — when it allows just the right sequence of glimpses through a parted curtain — we misleadingly call it “realistic.” Actual existence is rarely well choreographed.

The stories in “Dark Roots,” the Australian writer Cate Kennedy’s first collection, are melancholy but deliberate and coolly exact. They depict characters in crisis, often so mired in what Walker Percy called the malaise of everydayness that the horror of their condition is invisible to them. Some of the stories culminate in epiphanies; others hinge on a jolt — a violent act or loss. “I love the manipulation of readers’ emotions,” Kennedy has said. “It’s like pantomime: readers want to call out to a character, ‘Don’t go in there.’”

In the furious and perceptive title story, a woman on the edge of 40 hides her age from her younger boyfriend but resents him for the effort she puts into subterfuge. She finally confesses in bed one night, having endured half a wax job and then demanded that their lovemaking take place in utter darkness. It’s impossible, of course, to gauge the boyfriend’s “real, unadorned reaction to that news. You’ll have to turn the light on for that.” For every few stories with this kind of depth and dark, subtle humor, there’s one as heavy-handed as “The Testosterone Club.” A wife who spends her days making snacks for an arrogant, sports-obsessed husband and his buddies gets revenge by pickling a batch of virility-sapping cucumbers and driving into the sunset with the wedding crockery. It’s hard to care about these people when we’re never told how the woman ended up with her monstrous cartoon of a spouse, much less given a window into his motivations. The story feels gimmicky as a “Saturday Night Live” skit.

Kennedy’s prose, line by line, is sharp, evocative and often poetic, but the measured precision of her storytelling gives the writing a muted quality, as though it has been benumbed by the characters’ despair. Their pain unfolds before us like an aquarium show: silent, slow-moving, seen through glass. In “Seizure,” a woman realizes what’s wrong with her life after watching a stranger tend to a man in the midst of an epileptic fit. The tale is far too slight to sustain the symbolism packed into it. “A Pitch Too High for the Human Ear” is moving and desperately sad, but a little elaborately metaphoric. Andrew has passed 14 years in a perfunctory, taciturn marriage. “Don’t bother,” his wife says, when people try to engage him in conversation. “I married a non-talker.” The weight of all that lies unsaid between them pushes Andrew to act when the family dog loses its hearing.

Only in “Cold Snap” does the full range of Kennedy’s talent become clear. Here she breaks free of pantomime and proves herself capable of organic surprise and insight. Billy, a rural schoolboy, meets a city woman who’s bought the land where he traps rabbits. “Look, darling,” she tells her friend, “some local color.” After she systematically kills off some area trees, Billy gets his revenge, but it’s the unexpected details about life with his father that make the tale so spooky. The man punishes Billy’s classmate for making a “Deliverance” joke by cranking up the boiler and inviting the boy in to wash his hands. The kid runs away screaming, his hands “bright pink like plastic” from the hot running water. “Don’t forget to tell your friends,” Billy’s father calls after him. The right thing at the right moment: that’s what makes fiction feel like life.

Maud Newton writes about books as well as other matters at MaudNewton.com.
Read the title story from the collection *Dark Roots* (p77)

After you have read the story answer these questions:

**Dark Roots**

1. “You have traded in your unselfconsciousness for this double-visioned state of standing outside yourself, watchful and tensed for exposure.” (p.84) What is the effect of using second person narrative in this story?
2. How is tension created in this story?
3. Would you describe Mel’s tone as self-aware, self-critical, self-mocking, or a mix of each of these?
4. What does Mel value?
5. What is the view of middle-aged women in this story? Is it critical? Sympathetic?
6. “Time to go to a salon and have a cut and colour, she would say, with that complacent little sigh acknowledging the mysterious burden of female duty.” (p.83) In which other stories is this idea of the “burden of female duty” explored? What other forms do these duties take?
7. How do you as a reader react to the ending of the story?
8. Quote of the story:
Creative Response to *Dark Roots*

Choose one of the following topics and write a short story that draws on the ideas and writing techniques used by Kennedy in the title short story *Dark Roots*.

1. *Dark Roots*: ‘...you notice a door you’ve never been through before. And you open it and on the other side is another whole possible living space, another alternative route through each day.’ (p.79) Write your own short story, in the style of Kennedy, in which one of your characters makes this statement.

OR

2. Write a continuation of this story in which you imagine the boyfriend’s reaction, with either him or Mel as narrator or as a third person narrative.
Complete a summary of *Heart of Darkness* as you read the novella. Outline the key moments of action, character development and settings used by Conrad. Try to include key quotes that you find interesting or significant in the book’s construction.

As you make notes in the summary table, you should also mark each page so you can return to when we study the text next year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION, SETTINGS, CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT, IMAGERY...</th>
<th>KEY QUOTES:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“A haze rested on the low shores that ran out to sea in vanishing flatness. The air was dark above Gravesend, and farther back still seemed condensed into a mournful gloom, brooding motionless over the biggest, and the greatest, town on earth.”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Heart of Darkness - CHAPTER 2</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ACTION, SETTINGS, CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT, IMAGERY...</strong></td>
<td><strong>KEY QUOTES:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Heart of Darkness - CHAPTER 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTION, SETTINGS, CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT, IMAGERY...</strong></td>
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</table>
Heart of Darkness
...and its adaptation

Look at the film stills provided. After you have read Heart of Darkness and have developed an understanding of the characters through Conrad’s descriptions, write a short analytical paragraph that discusses the similarities and differences between Conrad’s characters and the some of the images portrayed in the stills.

1. Do the stills match your image of Marlow and Kurtz as described in the novella?
2. What qualities seem to be retained?
3. How are they different?

WRITE YOUR COMPARISON HERE:

---

Marlow is a thirty-two-year-old sailor who has always lived at sea...

Kurtz is an ivory trader in Africa and commander of a trading post, he monopolises his position as a demigod...
The Baron in the Trees
Italo Calvino

After reading the novel, take some time to write your interpretation of the text’s meaning through a 500 word review.

You review should include:
1. A summary of the novel’s storyline, plot and action.
2. Discussion of the key characters.
3. Discussion of the novel’s setting and context.
4. Calvino’s concerns regarding society’s constraints and the power of pursuing individual ideals.
5. Calvino’s writing style, symbols and descriptions.
6. What did you learn from the novel? Does it leave you with any questions?
“My father was an agronomist; my mother, a botanist,” Italian author Italo Calvino told his translator William Weaver, in an interview conducted for The Paris Review in 1983. “They were profoundly concerned with the vegetable world, with nature, the natural sciences. But they became aware very early that I had no inclination in that direction—the usual reaction of children towards their parents.” The family pedigree must have seeped in nevertheless, because one of Calvino’s earliest books, The Baron in the Trees, is precisely what you’d expect the novelist son of a pair of botanists to pen.

Italo Calvino was born in Havana, Cuba in 1923, but spent his youth in and around San Remo, Italy, where the Calvino family divided its time between an experimental flower farm in the city and a country house in the hills, sprawling with tropical cultivars like grapefruit and avocados. The author once admitted to experiencing boredom through his childhood, the kind “full of dreams, a sort of projection into another place, into another reality.” So it’s easy to imagine him, legs languid, seated in one of his father’s trees reading Robert Louis Stevenson or Franz Kafka like a living precursor to Cosimo Piovasco di Rondò, the hero of The Baron in the Trees (Il barone rampante).

The Baron in the Trees was first published in 1957, when Calvino was 34 years old. It’s a book I’ve read once or twice, and without doubt will read again. My copy carries pen marks, heavy underlining, and even the odd exclamation point; on each return visit, when I pick it up, I find more to underline, more to suck in deeply and dwell on. I think that’s the beauty of anything by Italo Calvino: his writing operates on both an emotional and technical level and implants itself deeply in the memory.

I still remember the first time I read of Cosimo, aged 12, the eldest son of Baron Arminio Piovasco di Rondò and the Baroness Corradina di Rondò (nicknamed the ‘Generalessa’), who stood up from the family dining table at lunchtime on 15 June 1767, refusing his plate of snails, and climbed into a holm oak tree never to set foot on the surface of the earth again. Cosimo’s story is told by his younger brother, Biagio, who admits: “Cosimo’s life was so uncommon, mine so ordinary and modest, and yet our childhood was spent together, both of us indifferent to the manias of adults, both trying to find paths unbeatenn by others.”

At its core The Baron in the Trees is a critical, creative story about individual identity and independence. On the verge of becoming a teenager, Cosimo refuses tradition and steps instead into a cosmic space on earth, which he discovers amongst the treetops. The vision which confronts him once he climbs into the tree is vast, enduring:

Cosimo was in the holm oak. The branches spread out – high bridges over the earth, a slight breeze blew; the sun shone. It shone through the leaves so that we had to shade our eyes with our hands to see Cosimo. From the tree Cosimo looked at the world; everything seen from up there was different...”
At that height the heir to the realm witnesses a complex system of trees, innately capable of providing him shelter and passage and in the branches of his new, arboreal kingdom he steps from oak to elm, from carob to mulberry, before entering his neighbour’s garden, Ondariva, atop a magnolia tree. There he meets Viola, his romantic mirror, and his fate is sealed. If Cosimo entered the trees to firmly strike his independence, he remained in the trees as an expression of his steady vision of love.

“In the Ondariva garden the branches spread out like the tentacles of extraordinary animals, and the plants on the ground opened up stars of fretted leaves like the green skins of reptiles, and waved feathery yellow bamboos with a rustle like paper. From the highest tree Cosimo, in his yearning to enjoy to the utmost the unusual greens of this exotic flora and its different lights and different silence, would let his head drop upside down, so that the garden became a forest, a forest not of this earth but a new world in itself.”

Calvino’s descriptions of trees are some of the most beguiling in the book. He describes how “olives, because of their tortuous shapes, were comfortable and easy passages for Cosimo, patient trees with rough, friendly bark on which he could pass or pause, in spite of the scarcity of thick branches and the monotony of movement which resulted from their shapes.” On the fig tree, by contrast, Cosimo “could move about forever; [he] would stand under the pavilion of leaves, watching the sun appear through the network of twigs and branches, the gradual swell of the green fruit, smelling the scent of flowers budding in the stalks. The fig tree seemed to absorb him, permeate him with its gummy texture and the buzz of hornets; after a little Cosimo would begin to feel he was becoming a fig himself, and move away, uneasy.” This writing can only come from an experienced tree-climber; someone with nature deeply engrained within.

Cosimo lives a lifetime in the trees – and Calvino goes about proving just how normal that lifetime can be. Up there, Cosimo continues his education; corresponds with philosophers; is acknowledged by Voltaire and Napoleon; sleeps, washes, and hunts. He falls in love and romances many women; becomes master to a dachshund; provides earthly services like pruning and fruit picking; befriends a criminal, and provides him with a constant flow of reading materials; fights pirates and invading armies; attends his father’s funeral and ultimately takes on the title of ‘Baron’, all the while walking the treetops with a “cat’s tread”.

It’s in the trees that Cosimo finds his truest, personal expression. “Only by being so frankly himself as he was ... could he give something to all men,” says his younger brother Biagio.

“Sometimes seeing my brother lose himself in the endless spread of an old tree, like some palace of many floors and innumerable rooms, I found a longing coming over me to imitate him and go and live up there too; such is the strength and certainty that this tree had in being a tree.” But Biagio quickly admits that there can only ever be one rebel in a family. Perhaps Calvino is that rebel too; an author living amongst a family of scientists!

Albert Camus and Italo Calvino are often alphabetical neighbours on the literature shelves of bookshops. In Camus’ book, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* he comments: “If I were a tree among trees, a cat among animals, this life would have a meaning or rather this problem would not arise, for I should belong to this world.” The Baron reaches this point of unity living among the trees: “… he who spent his nights listening to the sap running through its cells; the circles marking the years inside the trunks; the patches of mould growing ever larger helped by the north wind; the birds sleeping and quivering in their nests, then resettling their heads in the softest down of their wings; and the caterpillar waking, and the chrysalis opening.” But this is where Camus and Calvino’s philosophies diverge, because Calvino’s hero always maintains a close proximity to humanity. “No matter how many new qualities he acquired from his
closeness with plants and his struggles with animals, his place – it always seemed to me – was clearly with us,” says Biagio.

*This he understood: that association renders men stronger and brings out each person’s best gifts, and gives joy which is rarely to be had by keeping to oneself, the joy of realising how many honest decent capable people there are for whom it is worth giving one’s best.***

It is not a plot killer to tell you that Cosimo dies without ever touching the earth, instead carried off on the anchor rope of a hot air balloon that disappears on the horizon. “Youth soon passes on earth, so imagine it on the trees, where it is the fate of everything to fall: leaves, fruit.” This is Calvino at his fantastical best; providing a reflection on humanity that defies his own youthful age at the time he put pen to paper. Calvino the author once described his father as an agronomist and anarchist; his mother as botanist and pacifist. He, himself, was a baron amongst the trees.

**COMPARE your review of *The Baron in the Trees* with Sally Wilson’s interpretation of the text.**

1. Choose two points from Wilson’s review that you agree with and explain why using evidence from the novel.
2. Choose one point that you disagree with and explain why using evidence from the novel.
Seamus Heaney Biography
Academic, Educator, Poet, Journalist (1939–2013)

“The poet understands he has a veteran's understanding that the world is not quite trustworthy, and that we must be grateful for it when it is trustworthy.”
—Seamus Heaney

Synopsis
Born in County Londonderry, Northern Ireland, on April 13, 1939, Seamus Heaney published his first poetry book in 1966, *Death of a Naturalist*, creating vivid portraits of rural life. Later work looked at his homeland's civil war, and he won the 1995 Nobel Prize in Literature for his globally acclaimed oeuvre, with its focus on love, nature and memory. A professor and speaker, Heaney died on August 30, 2013.

Background and Early Career
Seamus Justin Heaney was born on April 13, 1939, on a farm in the Castledawson, County Londonderry region of Northern Ireland, the first of nine children in a Catholic family. He received a scholarship to attend the boarding school St. Columb's College in Derry and went on to Queens University in Belfast, studying English and graduating in 1961.
Heaney worked as a schoolteacher for a time before becoming a college lecturer and eventually working as a freelance scribe by the early ’70s. In 1965, he married Marie Devlin, a fellow writer who would figure prominently in Heaney's work. The couple went on to have three children.

Acclaimed Poet
Seamus Heaney had his poetry collection debut in 1966 with *Death of a Naturalist*, and went on to publish many more lauded books of poems that included *North* (1974), *Station Island* (1984), *The Spirit Level* (1996) and *District and Circle* (2006). Over the years, he also became known for his prose writing and work as an editor, as well as serving as a professor at Harvard and Oxford universities.

Nature, Love and Memory
Heaney's work is often a paean to the beauty and depth of nature, and he achieved great popularity among both general readers and the literary establishment, garnering a massive following in the United Kingdom. He wrote eloquently about love, mythology, memory (particularly on his own rural upbringing) and various forms of human relationships. Heaney also provided commentary on the sectarian civil war, known as the Troubles, which had beset Northern Ireland in works such as "Whatever You Say, Say Nothing." Heaney was later applauded for his translation of the epic poem *Beowulf* (2000), a global best-seller for which he won the Whitbread Prize. He had also crafted translations of *Laments*, by Jan Kochanowski, Sophocles's *Philoctetes* and Robert Henryson's *The Testament of Cresseid & Seven Fables*.

Wins Nobel Prize
Heaney was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1995 and later received England's T.S. Eliot and David Cohen prizes, among a wide array of accolades. He was known for his speaking engagements as well, and, as such, traveled across the world to share his art and ideas.
Death of a Naturalist
BY SEAMUS HEANEY

All year the flax-dam festered in the heart
Of the townland; green and heavy headed
Flax had rotted there, weighted down by huge sods.
Daily it sweltered in the punishing sun.
Bubbles gargled delicately, bluebottles
Wove a strong gauze of sound around the smell.
There were dragonflies, spotted butterflies,
But best of all was the warm thick slobber
Of frogspawn that grew like clotted water
In the shade of the banks. Here, every spring
I would fill jampotfuls of the jellied
Specks to range on window sills at home,
On shelves at school, and wait and watch until
The fattening dots burst, into nimble
Swimming tadpoles. Miss Walls would tell us how
The daddy frog was called a bullfrog
And how he croaked and how the mammy frog
Laid hundreds of little eggs and this was
Frogspawn. You could tell the weather by frogs too
For they were yellow in the sun and brown
In rain.

Then one hot day when fields were rank
With cowdung in the grass the angry frogs
Invaded the flax-dam; I ducked through hedges
To a coarse croaking that I had not heard
Before. The air was thick with a bass chorus.
Right down the dam gross bellied frogs were cocked
On sods; their loose necks pulsed like sails. Some hopped:
The slap and plop were obscene threats. Some sat
Poised like mud grenades, their blunt heads farting.
I sickened, turned, and ran. The great slime kings
Were gathered there for vengeance and I knew
That if I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it.
# Analysing Poetry: Heaney’s *Death of a Naturalist*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key aspects/questions</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Key Images/phrases/words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the poem about?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the significance of the title?</td>
<td></td>
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<td>What are the key ideas and concerns of the poem? What is Heaney’s view of these?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the setting of the poem? Is it significant?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Who is the narrator? What effect does this have on the poem’s message.</td>
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<td>Does the poem have a particular structure and/or rhyming scheme? If so what does it contribute to the meaning of the poem?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe the language of the poem? What does this add to the meaning?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the poem reveal about the narrator/author/audience?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
AGAMEMNON
From The Oresteia by Aeschylus

The events of Agamemnon take place against a backdrop that would have been familiar to an Athenian audience. Agamemnon is returning from his victory at Troy, which has been besieged for ten years by Greek armies attempting to recover Helen, Agamemnon's brother's wife, who was stolen by the treacherous Trojan Prince, Paris. (The events of the Trojan War are recounted in Homer’s Iliad.) The tragedies of the play occur as a result of the crimes committed by Agamemnon's family. His father, Atreus, boiled the children of his own brother, Thyestes, and served them to him. Clytemnestra's lover, Aegisthus (Thyestes's only surviving son), seeks revenge for that crime. Moreover, Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter, Iphigenia, to gain a favourable wind to Troy, and Clytemnestra murders him to avenge her death. The weight of history and heritage becomes a major theme of the play, and indeed the entire trilogy, for the family it depicts cannot escape the cursed cycle of bloodshed propagated by its past. (Sparknotes)

Agamemnon: “The gods made me sacrifice Iphigenia to ensure safe passage for the Greek fleet so that I could retrieve my brother’s wife Helen from Troy. I owed a blood debt to my brother Menelaus. I sacked Troy, killed the king and return with Troy’s gold and Cassandra as my slave. I long to see my country and my wife”.

Clytemnestra: “I ruled Argos for ten years, keeping order while Agamemnon was at war against Troy. I will never forgive him for killing our beloved daughter Iphigenia. I have plotted to kill him in revenge. And now he has brought home that woman Cassandra! I will kill her too”.

Read some more about Helen of Troy and Agamemnon’s family history for background to the cycle of revenge and justice.

Imagine you are Agamemnon or Clytemnestra. Write a monologue in which you justify your violent, murderous vendetta. Look at the passage provided and try to emulate Aeschylus’ language, imagery and style of dialogue.
Leader:  
We'll thank the gods, my lady — first this story, 
let me lose myself in the wonder of it all!  
Tell it start to finish, tell us all.

Clytemnestra:  
The city's ours — in our hands this very day!  
I can hear the cries in crossfire rock the walls.  
Pour oil and wine in the same bowl,  
what have you, friendship? A struggle to the end.  
So with the victors and the victims — couteries,  
you can hear them clashing like their feet.

They are kneeling by the bodies of the dead,  
embracing men and brothers, infants over  
the aged Johns that gave them life, and sobbing,  
as the yoke constricts their last free breath,  
for every dear one lost.

And the others  
there, plunging breakneck through the night —  
the labour of battle sets them down, ravenous,  
to breakfast on the last remains of Troy.  
Not by rank but chance, by the lot they drew,  
they lodge in the houses captured by the spurs,  
sitting in so soon, released from the open sky,  
the frost and dew. Lucky men, off guard at last,  
they sleep away their first good night in years.

If only they are revering the city's gods,  
the shrines of the gods who love the conquered land,  
no plunderer will be plundered in return.  
Just let no lust, no mad desire seize the armies  
to ript what they must not touch —  
overwhelmed by all they've won!

The run for home  
and safety waits, the swerve at the post,  
the final lap of the grueling two-lap race.  
And even if the men come back with no offence  
to the gods, the avenging dead may never rest —  
Oh let no new disaster strike! And here  
you have it, what a woman has to say.  
Let the best win out, clear to see.  
A small desire but all that I could want.