

Thursday 16 June 2022

9:00am – 12:00pm

Part IA, Paper 1

PRACTICAL CRITICISM AND CRITICAL PRACTICE I

*Answer **one question** from **Section A** and complete **Section B**. Please read the instructions for each section carefully.*

Do not present *the same material* **twice, either in this paper or in the examination as a whole.**

Irrelevant answers, or answers only tenuously related to the question, will be penalised.

In the case of handwritten scripts, Illegible handwriting may place candidates at a disadvantage.

*Write your **number**, not your name, on the cover sheet of **each** Section booklet.*

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS

20-page answer booklet x1

Rough work pad

You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed that you may do so by the Invigilator

SECTION A

Select **one** question from this Section.

Answer **both** parts (i) **and** (ii) of the question you have selected.

When answering part (ii) you are **permitted but not required** to extend your discussion of features that you addressed when answering part (i).

1. (i) Select from some of the features (e.g., formal, verbal, rhetorical, etc.) of the following passage – taken from an autobiography – and discuss their effects. *You should aim to spend no more than twenty minutes completing this task.*

(ii) 'It may be, on the one hand, that we can never know the truth about ourselves, however intently we seek for it and, on the other, that we possess knowledge of the self that we find too shameful to reveal, and that a protective narcissism defends against the humiliations attendant on confession and disclosure.'

(LAURA MARCUS)

To what extent does this quotation help to illuminate the following passage? *You should aim to spend no more than one hour completing this task.*

[*This passage is taken from an autobiography, in which the subject refers to herself – probably because she was aided by a number of scribes, to whom she dictated her experiences – in the third person.*]

[...] as sone as sche parceyvd that sche schulde crye, sche wolde kepyn it in as mech as sche myth, that the pepyl schulde not an herd it, for noyng of hem. For summe seyde it was a wikkyd spiryt vexid hir; sum seyde it was sekenes; sum seyde sche had dronkyn to mech wyn; sum bannyd hir; sum wished sche had ben in the havyn; sum wolde sche had ben in the se in a bottumles boyt; and so ich man as hym thowte. Other gostly men lovyd hir and favowrd hir the mor. Sum gret clerkys seyden owyr Lady cryed nevyr so, ne no seynt in hevyn, but thei knewyn ful lytyl what sche felt, ne thei wold not belevyn but that sche myth an absteynd hir fro crying yf sche had wold. 5

And therfor, whan sche knew that sch schulde cryen, sche kept it in as long as sche mygth and dede al that sche cowed to withstond it er ellys to put it away, til sche wex as blo as any leed, and evyr it schuld labowryn in hir mende mor and mor into the tyme that it broke owte. And whan the body myth ne lengar enduryn the gostly labowr, but was ovyrcome with the unspekabyll lofe that wrowt so fervently in the sowle, than fel sche down and cryed wondyr lowde. And the mor that sche wolde labowryn to kepe it in er to put it away, mech the mor schulde sche cryen and the mor lowder. And thus sche dede in the Mownt of Calvarye, as it is wretyn befor. 10 15

Sche had so very contemplacyon in the sygth of hir s[owle] as yf Crist had hangyn befor hir bodily eye in hys manhode. And whan thorw dispensacyon of the hy mercy of owyr Sovereyn Savyowr, Crist Jhesu, it was grawntyd this creatur to beholdyn so verily hys precyows tendyr body – alto-rent and toryn with scorgys, more 20

ful of wowndys than evyr was duffehows of holys, hangyng upon the cros with the
corown of thorn upon hys hevyd, hys blysfyl handys, hys tendyr fete nayled to the
hard tre, the reverys of blood flowing owt plentevowsly of every member, the gresly
and grevows wiwnde in hys precyows syde schedyng owt blood and watyr for hir lofe
and hir salvacyon – than sche fel down and cryed with lowde voys, wondyrfully 25
turning and wresting hir body on very syde, spredyng hir armys abroad as yyf sche
schulde a deyde, and not cowed kepyn hir fro crying and these bodily mevyngys, for the
fyer of lofe that brent so fervently in hir sowle with pur pyte and compassyon.

(MARGERIE KEMPE, from *The Book of Margery Kempe*, c.1436-38)

for noyng of hem: because of annoying them
bannyd: cursed
havyn: harbour
gostly: spiritually minded
blo: leaden coloured
labowryn: seethe
wrowt: worked
labowryn: make an effort
so very: such true
alto-rent: rent to pieces
duffehows: dove-cote
wrestyng: twisting
mevyngys: movements

(TURN OVER)

2. (i) Select from some of the features (e.g., formal, verbal, rhetorical, etc.) of the following passage and discuss their effects. *You should aim to spend no more than twenty minutes completing this task.*

(ii) 'Does understanding from where speech derives its power to wound alter our conception of what it might mean to counter that wounding power? [...] I want to argue that the very reasons that account for the injuriousness of such acts, construed as speech in a broad sense, are precisely what render difficult the prosecution of such acts. [...] I want to suggest that the court's speech carries with it its own violence, and that the very institution that is invested with the authority to adjudicate the problem of hate speech recirculates and redirects that hatred in and as its own highly consequential speech, often by co-opting the very language that it seeks to adjudicate.'

(JUDITH BUTLER)

In what ways does this statement help to clarify or complicate your reading of this scene? You should aim to spend no more than one hour completing this task.

[The following passage is taken from the first scene of a play. The characters, here – Face, Subtle and Doll Common – have come into possession of a house, which they intend to use as a headquarters for a confidence trick. Having agreed to this, Subtle and Face argue about their roles and relative importance, and Doll is compelled to mediate.]

Subtle.	Away, you trencher-rascal.	
Face.	Out, you dog-leech,	
	The vomit of all prisons –	
Doll.	Will you be	
	Your own destructions, gentlemen?	5
Face.	Still spew'd out	
	For lying too heavy o' the basket.	
Sub.	Cheater.	
Face.	Bawd.	
Sub.	Cow-herd.	10
Face.	Conjuror.	
Sub.	Cutpurse.	
Face.	Witch.	
Doll.	O me!	
	We are ruin'd! Lost! Ha' you no more regard	15
	To your reputations? Where's your judgement? 'Slight,	
	Have yet some care of me, o' your republic –	
Face.	Away this brach. I'll bring thee, rogue, within	
	The statute of sorcery, <i>tricesimo tertio</i>	
	Of Harry the eight: ay, and (perhaps) thy neck	20
	Within a noose, for laund'ring gold, and barbing it.	
Doll.	You'll bring our head within a cockscomb, will you?	

[Snatches Face's sword; and breaks Subtle's glass.]

And you, sir, with your menstree, gather it up.
'Sdeath, you abominable pair of stinkards,
Leave off your barking, and grow one again, 25
Or, by the light that shines, I'll cut your throats.
I'll not be made a prey unto the marshal
For ne'er a snarling dog-bolt of you both.
Ha' you together cozen'd all this while,
And all the world, and shall it now be said 30
Y' have made most courteous shift to cozen yourselves?
[*To Face.*] You will accuse him? You will bring him in
Within the statute? Who shall take your word?
A whoreson, upstart, apocryphal captain,
Whom not a puritan in Blackfriars will trust 35
So much, as for a feather! [*To Subtle.*] And you, too,
Will give the cause, forsooth? You will insult,
And claim a primacy in the divisions?
You must be chief? As if you, only, had
The powder to project with, and the work 40
Were not begun out of equality?
The venture tripartite? All things in common?
Without priority? 'Sdeath, you perpetual curs,
Fall to your couples again, and cozen kindly,
And heartily, and lovingly, as you should, 45
And lose not the beginning of a term,
Or, by this hand, I shall grow factious too,
And take my part, and quit you.
Face. 'Tis his fault,
He ever murmurs, and objects his pains, 50
And says the weight of all lies upon him.
Sub. Why, so it does.
Doll. How does it? Do not we
Sustain our parts?
Sub. Yes, but they are no equal. 55
Doll. Why, if your part exceed today, I hope
Ours may, tomorrow, match it.
Sub. Ay, they may.

(BEN JONSON, from *The Alchemist*, 1610)

trencher-rascal: gluttonous eater

brach: bitch

tricesimo tertio (Latin): thirty-third [year of the reign of] Henry VIII

barbing: clipping the edges

menstree: a solvent; a mess, discharge

marshal: officer of the courts in charge of prisoners, or officer in charge of a prison

(TURN OVER)

3. (i) Select from some of the features (e.g., formal, verbal, rhetorical, etc.) of the following passage and discuss their effects. *You should aim to spend **no more than twenty minutes** completing this task.*

(ii) 'This passion to know and to understand is positive insofar as it encourages us to explore a mysterious world. But it also brings a danger – that of being possessed by the illusion of greater familiarity with the past than one really has. I hope I was taking precautions against this temptation when I was a student, and I certainly try to take them today. We must always remember to be humble toward this past that we study, this past that beckons us. Never decide things too soon – or rather, never imagine we have the power to understand everything. When we do historical research, we want to be conscious of moving into the past, into a sphere different from our own, and yet maintain an essential detachment.'

(NATALIE ZEMON DAVIS)

In what ways does this description of method help or fail to illuminate Austen's approach to writing about the past? *You should aim to spend **no more than one hour** completing this task.*

HENRY THE 4TH

Henry the 4th ascended the throne of England much to his own satisfaction in the year 1399, after having prevailed on his cousin & predecessor Richard the 2^d, to resign it to him, & to retire for the rest of his Life to Pomfret Castle, where he happened to be murdered. It is to be supposed that Henry was married, since had certainly four sons, but it is not in my power to inform the Reader who was his Wife. Be this as it may, he did not live for ever, but falling 5
ill, his son the Prince of Wales came and took away the crown; whereupon the King made a long speech, for which I must refer the Reader to Shakespear's Plays, & the Prince made a still longer. Things being thus settled between them the King died, & was succeeded by his son Henry who had previously beat Sir William Gascoigne.

HENRY THE 5TH

This Prince after he succeeded to the throne grew quite reformed & Amiable, forsaking all 10
his dissipated Companions, & never thrashing Sir William again. During his reign, Lord Cobham was burnt alive, but I forget what for. His Majesty then turned his thoughts to France, where he went & fought the famous Battle of Azincourt. He afterwards married the King's daughter Catherine, a very agreeable Woman by Shakespear's account. In spite of all 15
this however he died, and was succeeded by his son Henry.

HENRY THE 6TH

I cannot say much for this Monarch's Sense – Nor would if I could, for he was a Lancastrian. I suppose you know all about the Wars between him & the Duke of York who was of the right side; if you do not, you had better read some other History, for I shall not be very

diffuse in this, meaning by it only to vent my Spleen *against*, & shew my Hatred *to* all those people whose parties or principles do not suit with mine, & not to give information. This 20
King married Margaret of Anjou, a Woman whose distresses & Misfortunes were so great as almost to make me who hate her, pity her. It was in this reign that Joan of Arc lived & made such a *row* among the English. They should not have burnt her – but they did. There were several Battles between the Yorkists & Lancastrians, in which the former (as they ought) usually conquered. At length they were entirely over come; The King was murdered – The 25
Queen was sent home – and Edward the 4th Ascended the Throne.

(JANE AUSTEN, from 'The History of England' (1791), from *Teenage Writings*)

(TURN OVER)

4. (i) Select from some of the features (e.g., formal, verbal, rhetorical, etc.) of the following poem and discuss their effects. *You should aim to spend no more than twenty minutes completing this task.*

(ii) 'Radicalism of thought now calls for intensive acts of *deciphering*, thanks to a heightened sense of the duplicity of language and the uncertain links between signs and meaning. The aim [of some thinkers] is not just to underscore the unreliability of knowledge – a theme amply mined by previous generations of philosophers. Rather, these thinkers instantiate a new suspicion of *motives* – of the ubiquity of deception and self-deception. Rather than being conveyed in words, truth lies beneath, behind, or to the side of these words, encrypted in what cannot be said, in revelatory stutterings and recalcitrant silences.'

(RITA FELSKI)

Does a close reading of the following poem prompt you to agree or disagree with this description of critique? *You should aim to spend no more than one hour completing this task.*

What?

Strengthening as secret manna, Fostering as clouds above, Kind as a hovering dove, Full as a plenteous river, Our glory and our banner For ever and for ever.	5
--	---

Dear as a dying cadence Of music in the drowsy night; Fair as the flowers which maidens Pluck for an hour's delight, And then forget them quite.	10
--	----

Gay as a cowslip meadow Fresh opening to the sun When new day is begun; Soft as a sunny shadow When day is almost done.	15
---	----

Glorious as purple twilight, Pleasant as budding tree, Untouched as any islet Shrined in an unknown sea; Sweet as a fragrant rose amid the dew; – As sweet, as fruitless too.	20
--	----

A bitter dream to wake from, But oh how pleasant while we dream; A poisoned fount to take from, But oh how sweet the stream.	25
---	----

(CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1853), from *New Poems, Hitherto Unpublished or Uncollected*, 1896)

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(TURN OVER

5. (i) Select from some of the features (e.g., formal, verbal, rhetorical, etc.) of the following passage – an extract from a novel – and discuss their effects. *You should aim to spend no more than twenty minutes completing this task.*

(ii) 'It is always a question about any list whether it is arranged in a sequence of ascending or descending priority or along more complicated loops or whether it is just disarrayed (and if so, why it is disarrayed – has the writer carefully tousled it, like a photographer artistically mussing a model's hair to look more casual and alluring, or did it just tumble out any old how?). The order of items of information is itself an item of information.'

(ERIC GRIFFITHS)

In light of this statement, explore the ways in which the passage conveys information. *You should aim to spend no more than one hour completing this task.*

Sometimes at night the burned man hears a faint shudder in the building. He turns up his hearing aid to draw in a banging noise he still cannot interpret or place.

She picks up the notebook that lies on the small table beside his bed. It is the book he brought with him through the fire – a copy of *The Histories* by Herodotus that he has added to, cutting and gluing in pages from other books or writing in his own observations – so they all are cradled within the text of Herodotus. 5

She begins to read his small gnarled handwriting.

There is a whirlwind in southern Morocco, the *aafej*, against which the fellahin defend themselves with knives. There is the *africo*, which has at times reached into the city of Rome. The *alm*, a fall wind out of Yugoslavia. The *arifi*, also christened *aref* or *rifi*, which scorches with numerous tongues. These are permanent winds that live in the present tense. 10

There are other, less constant winds that change direction, that can knock down horse and rider and realign themselves anticlockwise. The *bist roz* leaps into Afghanistan for 170 days – burying villages. There is the hot, dry *ghibli* from Tunis, which rolls and rolls and produces a nervous condition. The *haboob* – a Sudan dust storm that dresses in bright yellow walls a thousand metres high and is followed by rain. The *harmattan*, which blows and eventually drowns itself into the Atlantic. *Imbat*, a sea breeze in North Africa. Some winds that just sigh towards the sky. Night dust storms that come with the cold. The *khamsin*, a dust in Egypt from March to May, named after the Arabic word for 'fifty', blooming for fifty days – the ninth plague of Egypt. The *datoo* out of Gibraltar, which carries fragrance. 15 20

There is also the ———, the secret wind of the desert, whose name was erased by a king after his son died within it. And the *nafhat* – a blast out of Arabia. The *mezzar-ifoullousen* – a violent and cold southwesterly known to Berbers as 'that which plucks the fowls.' The *beshabar*, a black and dry northeasterly out of the Caucasus, 'black wind.' The *Samiel* from Turkey, 'poison and wind,' used often in battle. As well as the other 'poison winds,' the *simoom*, of North Africa, and the *solano*, whose dust plucks off rare petals, causing giddiness. 25

Other, private winds.

Travelling along the ground like a flood. Blasting off paint, throwing down telephone poles, transporting stones and statue heads. The *harmattan* blows across the Sahara filled 30

with red dust, dust as fire, as flour, entering and coagulating in the locks of rifles. Mariners called this red wind the 'sea of darkness.' Red sand fogs out of the Sahara were deposited as far north as Cornwall and Devon, producing showers of mud so great this was also mistaken for blood. 'Blood rains were widely reported in Portugal and Spain in 1901.'

There are always millions of tons of dust in the air, just as there are millions of cubes 35
of air in the earth and more living flesh in the soil (worms, beetles, underground creatures)
than there is grazing and existing on it. Herodotus records the death of various armies
engulfed in the *simoom* who were never seen again. One nation was 'so enraged by this
evil wind that they declared war on it and marched out in full battle array, only to be rapidly
and completely interred.' 40

Dust storms in three shapes. The whirl. The column. The sheet. In the first the horizon
is lost. In the second you are surrounded by 'waltzing Ginns.' The third, the sheet, is 'copper-
tinted. Nature seems to be on fire.'

(MICHAEL ONDAATJE, from *The English Patient*, 1992)

(TURN OVER)

SECTION B

Compare **two** of the following passages in any way you wish.

You should spend **no more than an hour and twenty minutes** on this task.

- a) Of Decembre the tenthe day,
 Whan hit was nyght to slepe I lay
 Ryght ther as I was wont to done,
 And fil on slepe wonder sone,
 As he that wery was forgo 5 was all exhausted
 On pilgrimage myles two
 To the corseynt Leonard, the shrine of St. Leonard
 To make lythe of that was hard. soft, easy
- But as I slepte, me mette I was
 Withyn a temple ymad of glas, 10
 In which ther were moo ymages
 Of gold, stondynge in sondry stages, stands, supports for statues
 And moo ryche tabernacles,
 And with perre moo pynacles, precious stones
 And moo curiouse portreytures, 15
 And queynte maner of figures
 Of olde werk, then I saugh ever.
 For certeynly, I nyste never
 Wher that I was, but wel wyste I
 Hyt was of Venus redely, 20
 The temple; for in portreyture
 I sawgh anoon-ryght hir figure
 Naked fletynge in a see,
 And also on hir hed, pardee,
 Hir rose garlond whit and red, 25
 And hir comb to kembe hyr hed,
 Hir dowves, and daun Cupido
 Hir blynde sone, and Vulcano,
 That in his face was ful broun. blackened (from work at his forge)
- But as I romed up and doun, 30
 I fond that on a wall ther was
 Thus written on a table of bras:
 'I wol now synge, yif I kan,
 The armes and also the man
 That first cam, thurgh his destinee, 35
 Fugityf of Troy contree,
 In Itayle, with ful moche pyne
 Unto the strondes of Lavyne.'
 And tho began the story anoon,
 As I shal telle yow echon. 40

(GEOFFREY CHAUCER, from *The House of Fame*, c.1379)

b)

ACT II. SCENE II.

Enter INNOGEN in her bed. A trunk is nearby.

Enter to her HELEN, a Lady.

Innogen. Who's there? My woman Helen?

Helen. Please you, madam.

Inn. What hour is it?

Hel. Almost midnight, madam.

Inn. I have read three hours then; mine eyes are weak. 5

Fold down the leaf where I have left. To bed.

Take not away the taper, leave it burning,

And if thou canst awake by four o'th' clock,

I prithee, call me. Sleep hath seized me wholly.

Exit Helen.

To your protection I commend me, gods, 10

From fairies and the tempters of the night,

Guard me, beseech ye. [*Sleeps.*]

IACHIMO comes from the trunk.

Iachimo. The crickets sing, and man's o'erlaboured sense

Repairs itself by rest. Our Tarquin thus

Did softly press the rushes ere he wakened 15

The chastity he wounded. Cytherea,

another name for Venus

How bravely thou becom'st thy bed! Fresh lily,

And whiter than the sheets! That I might touch,

But kiss, one kiss. Rubies unparagoned, 20

How dearly they do't! 'Tis her breathing that

Perfumes the chamber thus. The flame o'th' taper

Bows toward her and would under-peep her lids

To see th'enclosed lights, now canopied

Under these windows, white and azure laced 25

With blue of heaven's own tinct. But my design –

To note the chamber. I will write all down.

[*He begins to write.*]

Such and such pictures, there the window, such

Th'adornment of her bed, the arras, figures,

Why, such and such; and the contents o'th' story. 30

Ah, but some natural notes about her body,

Above ten thousand meaner moveables,

Would testify, t'enrich mine inventory.

O sleep, thou ape of death, lie dull upon her,

And be her sense but as a monument 35

Thus in a chapel lying. [...]

(WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, from *Cymbeline*, c.1611)

(TURN OVER

- c) [*The following complete poem was sent by the poet to her lover, Francesco Algarotti. It was accompanied by a portrait of her younger self.*]

This once was me, thus my complexion fair,
 My cheek thus blooming, and thus curl'd my Hair,
 This picture which with Pride I us'd to show
 The lost resemblance but upbraids me now,
 Yet all these charms I only would renew 5
 To make a mistress less unworthy you.

'Tis said, the Gods by ardent Vows are gain'd,
 Iphis her wish (however wild) obtain'd,
 Pygmalion warm'd to Life his Ivory maid,
 Will no kind power restore my charms decay'd? 10

With useless Beauty my first Youth was crown'd,
 In all my Conquests I no pleasure found,
 The croud I shunn'd, nor of Applause was vain
 And Felt no pity for a Lover's pain.
 The pangs of passion coldly I despise 15
 And view'd with scorn the ravage of my Eyes.
 Now that contempt too dearly is repaid,
 Th'impetuous Fire does my whole Soul invade.
 O more than Madness! – with compassion View
 A Heart could only be inflam'd by You. 20
 In that Lov'd Form there does at once unite
 All that can raise Esteem, or give delight,
 A Heart like mine is not below your care,
 Artless and Honest, tender and sincere,
 Where no mean thought has ever found a place 25
 Look on my Heart, and you'll forget my Face.

(LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU, 1736)

Iphis: according to Roman myth, Iphis was born a woman; having fallen in love with Ianthe, Iphis is transformed into a man thanks to the intervention of the goddess Isis

Pygmalion: according to Roman myth, Pygmalion fashions a sculpture; having made offerings to Aphrodite, he discovers that his sculpture has been brought to life

- d) [*Milly Theale, a wealthy American, is the guest of Lord Mark. This scene involves his showing her a portrait by Bronzino – a Florentine painter of the sixteenth century – which, he claims, bears a marked resemblance to her.*]

Once more things melted together – the beauty and the history and the facility and the splendid midsummer glow: it was a sort of magnificent maximum, the pink dawn of an apotheosis, coming so curiously soon. What in fact befell was that, as she afterwards made out, it was Lord Mark who said nothing in particular – it was she herself who said all. She couldn't help that – it came; and the reason it came was that she found herself, for the first moment, looking at the mysterious portrait through tears. Perhaps it was her tears that made it just then so strange and fair – as wonderful as he had said: the face of a young woman, all magnificently drawn, down to the hands, and splendidly dressed; a face almost livid in hue, yet handsome in sadness and crowned with a mass of hair, rolled back and high, that must, before fading with time, have had a family resemblance to her own. The lady in question, at all events, with her slightly Michael-angelesque squareness, her eyes of other days, her full lips, her long neck, her recorded jewels, her brocaded and wasted reds, was a very great personage – only unaccompanied by a joy. And she was dead, dead, dead. Milly recognised her exactly in words that had nothing to do with her. 'I shall never be better than this.'

He smiled for her at the portrait. 'Than she? You'd scarce need to be better, for surely that's well enough. But you *are*, one feels, as it happens, better; because, splendid as she is, one doubts if she was good.'

He hadn't understood. She was before the picture, but she had turned to him, and she didn't care if for the minute he noticed her tears. It was probably as good a moment as she should ever have with him. It was perhaps as good a moment as she should have with any one, or have in any connexion whatever. 'I mean that everything this afternoon has been too beautiful, and that perhaps everything together will never be so right again. I'm very glad therefore you've been a part of it.'

Though he still didn't understand her he was as nice as if he had; he didn't ask for insistence, and that was just a part of his looking after her. He simply protected her now from herself, and there was a world of practice in it. 'Oh we must talk about these things!'

Ah they had already done that, she knew, as much as she ever would; and she was shaking her head at her pale sister the next moment with a world, on her side, of slowness. 'I wish I could see the resemblance. Of course her complexion's green,' she laughed; 'but mine's several shades greener.'

'It's down to the very hands,' said Lord Mark.

'Her hands are large,' Milly went on, 'but mine are larger. Mine are huge.'

'Oh you go her, all round, "one better" – which is just what I said. But you're a pair. You must surely catch it,' he added as if it were important to his character as a serious man not to appear to have invented his plea.

'I don't know – one never knows one's self. [...]'

(HENRY JAMES, from *The Wings of the Dove*, 1902)

(TURN OVER)

- e) [The following complete poem is accompanied by notes the poet herself provided when the poem was published in a volume called *Observations*.]

WHEN I BUY PICTURES

or what is closer to the truth,
when I look at that of which I may regard myself as the imaginary possessor,
I fix upon what would give me pleasure in my average moments:
the satire upon curiosity in which no more is discernible than the intensity of the mood;
or quite the opposite – the old thing, the mediæval decorated hat-box, 5
in which there are hounds with waists diminishing like the waist of the hourglass
and deer and birds and seated people;
it may be no more than a square of parquetry; the literal biography perhaps –
in letters standing well apart upon a parchment-like expanse;
an artichoke in six varieties of blue; the snipe-legged hieroglyphic in three parts; 10
the silver fence protecting Adam's grave, or Michael taking Adam by the wrist.
Too stern an intellectual emphasis upon this quality or that, detracts from one's enjoyment;
it must not wish to disarm anything; nor may the approved triumph easily be honored –
that which is great because something else is small.
It comes to this: of whatever sort it is, 15
it must be 'lit with piercing glances into the life of things';
it must acknowledge the spiritual forces which have made it.

(MARIANNE MOORE, from *Observations*, 1925)

snipe legged hieroglyphic: Egyptian low relief in The Metropolitan Museum

'A silver fence was erected by Constantine to enclose the grave of Adam': *Literary Digest*, Jan. 5, 1918; a descriptive paragraph with photograph

Michael taking Adam: wash drawing by Blake; 'Adam and Eve taken by Michael out of Eden.'

'lit by piercing glances': A. R. Gordon; *The Poets of the Old Testament*; Hodder and Stoughton, 1912

f) [...] up there on Lenox, in Violet and Joe Trace's apartment, the rooms are like the empty birdcages wrapped in cloth. And a dead girl's face has become a necessary thing for their nights. They each take turns to throw off the bedcovers, rise up from the sagging mattress and tiptoe over cold linoleum into the parlor to gaze at what seems like the only living presence in the house: the photograph of a bold, unsmiling girl staring from the mantelpiece. If the tiptoer is Joe Trace, driven by loneliness from his wife's side, then the face stares at him without hope or regret and it is the absence of accusation that wakes him from his sleep hungry for her company. No finger points. Her lips don't turn down in judgment. Her face is calm, generous and sweet. But if the tiptoer is Violet the photograph is not that at all. The girl's face looks greedy, haughty and very lazy. The cream-at-the-top-of-the-milkpail face of someone who will never work for anything; someone who picks up things lying on other people's dressers and is not embarrassed when found out. It is the face of a sneak who glides over to your sink to rinse the fork you have laid by her plate. An inward face – whatever it sees is its own self. You are there, it says, because I am looking at you.

Two or three times during the night, as they take turns to go look at that picture, one of them will say her name. Dorcas? Dorcas. The dark rooms grow darker: the parlor needs a struck match to see the face. Beyond are the dining room, two bedrooms, the kitchen – all situated in the middle of the building so the apartment's windows have no access to the moon or the light of a street lamp. The bathroom has the best light since it juts out past the kitchen and catches the afternoon rays. Violet and Joe have arranged their furnishings in a way that might not remind anybody of the rooms in *Modern Homemaker* but it suits the habits of the body, the way a person walks from one room to another without bumping into anything, and what he wants to do when he sits down. You know how some people put a chair or a table in a corner where it looks nice but nobody in the world is ever going to go over to it, let alone sit down there? Violet didn't do that in her place. Everything is put where a person would like to have it, or would use or need it.

(TONI MORRISON, from *Jazz*, 1992)

END OF PAPER