

Question 1

How does the author celebrate a love of self in Text 1? (*approximately 200–350 words*)

Walcott's poem, 'Love after love', celebrates a love of self through the imagery of differentiation and disconnect between body and mind, which is seen to be eventually overcome. By conceptualising an individual as having two parts that should merge and "smile at [each] other's welcome", Walcott is able to convey that self love and acceptance is imperative and possible.

The speaker is evidently exploring the intersection between Christianity, and finding self directed worth, love and peace. Walcott urges readers to "Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart". The entire third stanza is a clear biblical allusion to communion, where wine and bread is given to Jesus Christ. Instead of encouraging this, the author encourages giving and generosity to yourself. It is implied through the subtext of this that religion acts as a facilitator for some people to "ignore" their individual sense of self, and the call to action is to find love in "yourself" and "your life".

The direct address to the readers is paired with a second person narrative perspective, which confronts readers with the ideas of abrogation of self celebration. The call to action, to "take down the love letters from the bookshelf" and thus stop seeking validation and worthiness from external sources and people, motivates readers to make changes in their own lives. The concluding line of the concluding stanza, "Feast on your life" can not be ignored as it is emphasised through it's short length contrasting to the run on sentence preceding it. Feasting is synonymous with celebration, and thus this final message remains with readers.

Therefore, the process of learning to self love and celebrate individuality without external validation is conveyed and readers are led to consider and evaluate the forces on their own lives that lead to their sense of love.

Question 2

How does the author explore the ways in which love changes over time in Text 2? (*approximately 300–500 words*)

Jane Hirshfield explores the way in which love changes over time through the extended personification of love from an emotion, to a tangible object and living thing that has "breath" and its own emotions of "embarrass[ment]" and "perplex[ion]".

Love begins as a defensive animal, whose "haunches" are raised and strength is diminishing as "its breath" grows "short". This extended imagery is developed into the imagery of love choosing "shoes" and a "scarf or tie" in preparation for a "great" event. Thus, within the first two stanzas, love is transformed from something that is dying, to something that holds anticipation, consideration and excitement. Juxtaposed with the initial neglected love, as "people passed by without turning their heads", the audience are introduced to a love that exists in harmony and bliss. Love is metaphorically and literally positioned to be drinking "beer" for breakfast and on a date "side by side" with another individual. Thus, love is presented as something that can be idyllic. The personification is extended through the lexical choice that presents love as "truly shy", and hiding in a defeated and submissive position with "its head" "dropped". Therefore, the speaker explores the vulnerability of love, and the fear that this can induce. The reader is engaged with the overcoming of this, so that love develops into "passion" of literature and confidence in the way that it is "spoke".

However, the author then confronts readers with the warning on the negative implications of love, in that the expectations of beauty can leave love, and thus individuals, without "fat" and "fold[s] of skin" to "soften". Therefore, the personification of love is seen to have great potential to harm as people are seen to be reliant on the "unconjured confidence" that it brings to lift "eyebrows" and "cheeks". This alludes to the great potential and power, and thus the great harm that can eventuate in the absence of love. The harsh consonance of "unconjured confidence" warns readers of this danger of the hardness and obsession that love can bring to individuals.

Finally, the penultimate stanza presents love and "longing" as something that has not faded, but with the personified ability to "understand", and grow to find love in the everyday surroundings. Love is seen to penetrate in such a way that it enables an appreciation of "African violets" or a "flowering cactus". These flora are exclusively grown in harsh and desolate environments, of the African plains or stretching desert. Therefore, Hirshfield presents love as something that can exist even in the most uninhabitable of circumstances. The metaphor of "cultivat[ing]" a desert plant into childish "blue and red painted pots" enables Hirshfield to show that love can be regrown and re-established in changing environments and circumstances.

Hirshfield concludes on the "disquieted" and anxious emotions that love can bring in a new environment. The simile of love being spread through a "single finger outstretched like a tiny flame", presents this cultivation of love as a dangerous and equally beautiful process. Like the constantly adapting nature of love, the stanza length also grows and retracts, in a seemingly random and unpredictable nature. Thus, without reading the poem, through the positioning of words on the page, a reader could conclude on the everchanging features of love over time.

Question 3

How does the author suggest that love is complicated in Text 3? (*approximately 300–500 words*)

'To have without holding' presents various ideas on love and relationships that ultimately illicit an emotional stirring in readers who are confronted with both the pain and beauty that love can bring. Percy conveys that love is complicated through the harsh onomatopoeia which establishes love as something requiring vulnerability and persistence. Furthermore, the effort and endurance required to maintain love is presented through alliteration and metaphorical language. This is juxtaposed with the final stanza that presents the beauty and flourishing impacts that love can bring, expressed by Percy through visual and olfactory imagery and the allusions to wedding vows.

Love is immediately presented as "hard", and whilst a reader may expect a reaction to something that is difficult and painful as retraction, Percy presents the solution as "open" vulnerability. Thus, love is seen to be more complex than this. The onomatopoeia of a house with doors "banging", wind "roaring", "whimpering", "rustling" and "snapping" shocks readers with a hell like home enduring an intense storm. However, Percy encourages readers to endure this with an "open palm" and in a position of vulnerable exposure to the difficulties that love may bring. A house with "snapping" and "whimpering" immediately alludes to the subtext of conflict and fighting that love may bring, and the expectation that this should be done in a private household. Thus, through vulnerably enduring arguments and love that exists through chaos and pain, love is presented as intrinsically complicated. If Percy was presenting love as simple and easy, the immediate response to this initial setting that is created, would be to leave. However, the imagery of a cupboard "unlocked", and thus open to others inspection and criticism mirrors the vulnerability that love and relationships can bring.

Love is shown to be complicated through the effort and persistence that Percy presents as symbiotic and necessary to enable love to exist. The chremamorphism of muscles, and insides of humans, becoming "blunt knives" and then "sharp knives", demonstrates the pain that must be endured. Love is presented as complex through the alliteration-filled simile of the "candle in a cave without air", which contributes to the theme of effort and "work" required to sustain love at times. A candle without oxygen is not one that is flourishing, similar to the perception of this complicated relationship. This idea is extended through the alliteration of love being "consciously, conscientiously, concretely and constructively" existing, which could be perceived as ironic, given the pain and "hurt" that it brings. Thus, love is seen to be complex because in some instances it is not rational or "constructive". If love were not complex, this candle would be left to extinguish, and the time and "work" put into it, put to better and more efficient processes. However, this is clearly not the case. Love is personified, and seen as something that can be childlike and "pester" and "remember". Thus, like the pestering persistence of past "lover[s]", love itself is seen to persist. Therefore, the personification of love enduring, even when it is unwanted like "the lover who is not in the bed", enables a mirroring of the situation of individuals. Individuals who love also demonstrate effort and persistence through relationships.

Finally, the concluding stanza juxtaposes the pain and chaos, with the visual and olfactory simile of love, "glow[ing] like a neon raspberry". This raspberry conveys the desirable and sweet nature of love, like raspberries, that is simple, but delicate, soft and tastful. Furthermore, the visual imagery of something that glows, represents the life, light and joy that love can bring to people's lives, like a "neon" sign at a show. The complexity of love is significant, but the "passion" that it brings in enabling people to metaphorical "sail" and succeed, could be seen to justify the pain of "knives" that it also brings. Percy deliberately includes a play-on-words of wedding vows "to have and not hold", in both the final stanza and the title, to show the union can concurrently coexist with independence and boundaries. Instead of 'having and holding', which is the traditional way of wedding vows, Percy suggests the complexity and individualised nature of both love and relationships, that can be tailored to suit individuals.

The author is able to establish a complex dichotomy of love that can be both "stretching" and "hurt[ing]", and simultaneously "bright" with a delicate "balance" of "passion" and "malice". This intrinsically is interpreted as complex, as enduring pain goes both against human intuition and evolutionarily developed "reflexes" that must be "thwart[ed]". It is through this that love is seen to be the most complicated, most rewarding and most dangerous human endeavour that is constantly in a balance.

A+ grade exemplar

Knowledge and Understanding

- Organised and profound knowledge

Analysis

- Probing, sophisticated, deep investigation
- Sustained, interrogative
- Mature evaluation a constant thread

Application

- Precise and fluent
- Skilled and succinct textual evidence
- Assured use of nomenclature
- Editing and response development is a strength