

VCE English Update

Please find below the 'Creating Texts – Framework of Ideas' SACs produced in response to writing about Protest by the following students:

- Piece one: Alex Davis
- Piece two: Kayne Fakira
- Piece three: Liam Ricard

Piece one: Alex Davies

My thongs barely holding up as I pedal serenely down the hot asphalt road,
anticipating that one perfect moment with every turn of the wheel.
My face drips with sweat, thick with the pungent sting of sunscreen as I carelessly
slip,
slop
and slap.
Then we make it.
The shade cloth cathedral,
a place where we find solace in the cool touch of the water.
With excitement, I run before being promptly stopped by the lifeguard.
My mouth dries as I crave the saccharine, almost sickly-sweet touch of a \$4.50 icy pole.
The pool: a true-blue Aussie icon.
But why the pool, not our wild coastline, not the beach?
The pool is where we learn to swim, where teenagers gather, where migrants begin to navigate a new life.
The sound of children calling out across the sterile stench of chlorine,
the sharp echo of a lifeguard's whistle,
a space so ordinary and yet also sacred.
The first pool in Australia was built by convicts on the coast, overlooking the ocean.
The "Commander's pool" was intended to cleanse and reinvent the elite,
a controlled, separate space from the untamed ocean.
But this place of purity and introspection soon became communal,
a space to gather and connect.
We are social animals crowding together, celebrating the elements of the Australian summer that define us.
We can all picture it -
Australia charging into bowl in the Ashes,
the mercury creeping above thirty-five,
cicadas screaming into the heat,
the sausage sizzling on the BBQ, and the kids splashing in the pool.
We trace our identity through our slogans:
"Come and Say G'day"
"Put another shrimp on the barbie"
The Aussie way – egalitarian and laidback.
Or at least that's the surface reflection.
But pools have not always been spaces of relaxation.
In Moree, in the 1960s, children stood at the fence line of a public pool,
watching others enter while being turned away.
The water was clear, but the rules were not.
In religious traditions, entering water promised renewal, the washing away of sin.
At the Pool of Siloam, a blind man was commanded to wash and his sight was returned, demonstrating
water's power not just to cleanse, but to reveal.
In Disney's *Mulan*, the puddle allows her to transition from the image of the perfect bride into a strong,
powerful individual, revealing identity.
Yet even these promises are fragile.
Water does not simply cleanse and transform,
it conforms to the shape it holds.
Pools are crafted by the beliefs of the societies that build them,
becoming mirrors of our collective values:
who belongs,

who is seen,
and who remains at the edge.
Like water, society reflects not truth but comfort,
sustaining the illusion of equality while resisting the disruption that protest demands.

You're not angry enough.

Pools do not simply reveal,
they reflect,
not truth,
but what we are willing to see,
spaces where societies attempt to wash away discomfort,
difference,
and disorder,
presenting instead a polished reflection of an "ideal" life.
But this clarity is constructed.
Historically, pools were not simply places of leisure,
they were vessels of control.
The promise of cleanliness masked something more troubling:
the desire to purify not just water, but people.
Australia's history of racial discrimination runs deep,
and the public pool has long reflected its divisions.
There were afternoons when the water was full, but entire communities were absent,
not by accident,
but by design.
In country towns in the 1960s, exclusion was enforced at the water's edge.
In Moree, Aboriginal children attempting to enter the pool were met with hostility and violence.
What surfaced was impossible to ignore:
systemic exclusion forcing a national reckoning with practices long kept beneath the surface.
This control was not confined to race.
Women's access was also shaped by rigid expectations of modesty and decorum,
restricted hours,
segregated spaces,
and heavy, impractical bathing costumes.
With the international eye of the 1912 Olympics,
bathing costumes and social attitudes shifted,
encouraging more outdoor pools across the country.
The pool, once again, revealed more than it concealed.

Why are you so mad?

We ask it constantly of each other,
of anyone who dares to disrupt the calm.
Yet look closer.
We rage over the trivial.
Over traffic.
Over sport.
Over a call that didn't go our way.
Voices raised.
Faces flushed.
But when it comes to injustice,
real, uncomfortable, inconvenient injustice
we silence.
We hesitate.
We distract.
So why does anger flow so freely where it matters least,
and stall where it matters most?
Why do we reserve concern for proximity?
And yet we have fought wars far from our shores.
So what do we value?
Comfort, or courage?

Are you listening yet?

For generations, public pools have been vital communal spaces, and any attempt to close them ignites resistance.

When Fitzroy Pool was announced for closure,
2000 community members gathered in the rain.

Two days later, 30 activists locked themselves inside, beginning a 40-day occupation—
playing cricket in a drained pool, holding barbecues, building something out of absence.

Inside the empty concrete bowl, voices replaced water,
the sound of children's laughter driving the campaigners to hold strong.

The power of memory and connection also drives those across the country fighting to keep the public pool alive:

"I learned to swim here."

"I feel heartbroken - I've been coming for 20 years."

"We never had the opportunity to swim. I was born in a war-torn country."

Protest, like water, finds a way to move.

But a new divide is emerging:

the rise of the private pool.

Water, once shared, becomes enclosed, occupied, owned.

The Great Australian Dream now comes with a pool.

There is no need to negotiate space,

no invitation to confront difference.

The surface remains calm.

Perfect and untouched.

When water is no longer shared, neither is struggle.

So, without shared spaces, where does protest begin?

The water is still.

And until we are willing to disturb the surface, nothing beneath it will ever change.

At Fitzroy, the water holds its own memory, etched into the poolside:

"Have a drink, jump in, enjoy the pool and don't let it happen again ... ever!"

Piece two: Kayne Fakira

The "light" that stole our freedom.
The whistle that the world heard.
What was once commonplace,
became rubble filled with permanent
shadows.

One... mile,
one... bomb,
one... hundred thousand human beings,
one... city reduced to dust.

Is this the salvation we deserved from our
"Messiah"?

Was the cost justified for the "freedom"
that we received?

Did it ever occur to the generals that the
freedoms of the deceased would never be
returned.

Did it ever occur to the pilots of the "Enola
Gay" that those innocent human beings
never did anything wrong.

Are we just pawns for those above us
to manipulate?

People who believe they are superior to
us.

People who believe they have the right to
control what we do.

Arrogant benefactors who stand proud on
their stage dictating other's future.

We must question the reality that is
presented.

We must wonder if this really is freedom,
or is it just complicit silence from everyone
involved.

We must rise to stand for our own lives.

Every day the liberties we
once sought are being pilfered.

Every day we lose a small piece of
our humanity when we choose to submit.

Inaction is an action of silence.

Total control is not peace.

Total control is not "alright."

What logic justifies allowing one person to

have complete sovereignty over a civilisation.
What logic justifies allowing an entire population to be under surveillance.
Are these the actions of liberators or are these actions of dictators?
Or are these actions of humans given so called "authority,"
humans who think they can take the lives of others for some intangible ideal.

Waking up to glass houses without any locks.
Waking up to empty streets with cameras on every light pole.
Waking up to the "Ministry of Truth" shouting orders.
Waking up to a civilisation that has "bio robots" as the workers.

Fiction which may be deemed unrealistic, yet that scenario is approaching everyday.
This is what happens when you relinquish your voice.
This is what happens when you choose silence and "normality" over your own freedom.

To let this happen,
is to let go of one's humanity.

Inaction is a choice,
an illogical choice that is not sufficient for us to retain freedom.
When someone protests injustice and is silenced.
That doesn't mean we allow the government to continue these heinous actions.
It demands further action from us to stand for righteousness.
If no one resists them,
what prevents the government from total suppression of our identity.
What prevents them from creating a "Brave New World?"

If we are unable to face the actuality of this situation,
are we any different from birds locked in a cage?
Ink of suppression will leak into neighbouring nations,
until it has spread across the map.

A person strolls down to go get their groceries,
meanwhile a black lens tracks their every movement.
That person pulls out a phone to message someone,
in doing so allowing it to scan their fingerprint and face.
Their personal information frequently monitored from their daily routine.
A seemingly irrational scenario that you might joke about,
with "Big Brother" overlooking us.
However, that is reality,
the small issues have become major issues integrating into nearly every part of our daily life.

Normality is not something we should thrive in.
Reality is not supposed to be comfortable.
The light will always prevail when we learn to step into it,
when we learn to leave our bubble of illusion.
Persistence is required for peace,
peace that our "protector" has hidden from us.

A screen flickers to life.
A voice dictates existence.
A woman runs through rows of identical faces;
blank, obedient, silent.
A hammer flies.
Glass fractures like the facade is being uncovered.
And another voice declares:
"On January 24th, Apple computer will introduce Macintosh. And you'll see why 1984 won't like 1984."
A vow disguised as liberation.
Right to rebellion packaged and sold away.

The world warned us of control,
while they used the very systems that shaped our consciousness to govern us.
The Macintosh commercial became a paradox.
Renaissance was promised,
Resistance was part of the deal.
And suddenly, Orwell is no longer just warning us,
he is being used as a tool inside the

machine he described.

While fiction was masked as salvation
The streets were resisting.
1984 was not just a novel,
it was a year.

A year where workers rebelled against
structure that demanded obedience in
exchange for survival.
Coal dust in the air
Picketers at gates
Communities torn apart from our so called
“liberators,”
The miner strikes were not abstract.
They were bodies that fed the economic
machine.
Voices unheard,
Just like Orwell’s warnings.
Yet again, the truth is hidden by those
claiming to spread freedom.
This was a year with three versions of
“truth”
One written as fiction.
One sold as innovation
One lived as resistance.
All pursuing the same question,
who controls the story of freedom?

War is peace they say,
Caged is freedom they say.
Should they be believed?

They can’t lie,
They’re our “Guardian,”
Is the irrational justification for their
aggression.

Justification which is completely illogical.

Human nature is to lie,
Human nature is to seek power,
Human nature is to desire empowerment.

Another page will be filled in the history
book.
No matter how full the book will get,
Lessons will never be learnt.
Human nature supersedes enlightenment.

We can no longer hide,
Uncomfortable truths must be seen.
If the birdcage is to be opened,
Self-awareness of one’s reality is a must.

The wind returned.
It moved through with no resistance,
And the dust,
began to settle.
It fell not as ash alone,
but in the form of something new.
One grain at a time,
covering what had been,
walls, streets,
voices, futures.
Declarations unable to be heard.
Only particles returning everything to the
same level.
One Mile.
One city.
One silence,
even the dust forgot where it had come
from.

Piece three: Liam Rickard

There is something I would like everyone here to stop and think about for a second. I would like for you to consider the way you think. More specifically, I would like you to think about how you make decisions.

Even now, I am sure you’ve made countless decisions, conscious or not. Get up early, or sleep in late? Cereal for breakfast, or toast? Come into work, or call in sick to save yourself from an entire day of speeches?

The trend in all thoughts like that is simple: there are two. Two options to choose from, good or bad, positive or negative, yes or no. They’re binary.

We tend to reduce everything to black and white for simplicity’s sake, but also for our own security. We like to have a frame of reference to make sure we make the ‘right’ choices. But do we choose right?

Quite simply, the world is not in black and white. It’s much more complex, scarily so. There is always a grey area in between.

One of the biggest problems we face in the world is the limited scope of how we see it. We are to blame for it, but also, we’re not. How is that possible? Because we fail to see the grey. It’s a vibrant kaleidoscope of colour, a paradise of infinite possibilities, yet we are blind to its true nature.

Entire ways of thinking fall victim to this colour-blindness. What we see, hiding behind facades of colour, is bleaching and darkening with every passing day. The politics that guide our lives – the progressive and radical or the conservative and orthodox – are becoming polarised. They slowly move towards the extremes, and we let it happen because we only see one or the other. We're either with them or we're against them.

We let these diametric dynamics blind us. We become enemies to those close to us through simple opinions, and tolerate hatred towards fellow humans. The extreme becomes the norm, and we fail to move forward. In seeing only black and white, we've trapped ourselves in the past.

It's easy to fall for the lies of politics. The blue and red flags of ideas, ever so opposed to each other, fly across all continents. We see shades between, yet always towards one end or the other, fighting alongside them, but also against them. One day, orange is the new black, and another, green is the new white. If you've listened to the news lately, you'll be familiar with it.

Yet, even though it's all around us, we rarely pay attention to the grey. It's right there, yet we try to ignore it. The grey area of politics is the grey area of thinking. It's ambiguous and neutral, but also balanced, compromising, and moderate. Grey is the middle ground, and yet we never seem to meet there. Yet people think the grey area is 'bad.' They think it is inaction rather than action, indecision rather than enlightenment.

We think of the past as black and white. All the photos and history we have of it are so, and yet we've discovered how to print in colour. But we have obviously advanced, right? No. We see and hear the echoes of the past even now. The ideas of the Second World War – the motifs of the swastika and hammer & sickle, the battle between the left and right – are eerily familiar, even when they seem to have been replaced.

Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it, we preach, yet it continues to repeat. Have we not learnt from it?

Truthfully, we cannot be blamed for the way we see the world. The binary mindset – the two options that are laid out before us – is the product of our need for comfort. We don't want to change, yet we must. Famous author Leo Tolstoy is credited as saying that "everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself," yet even though he died over a century ago, nobody has taken his message to heart.

There is no ease in seeing the grey when we've been conditioned by ourselves and others, only to see the black and white. Theodore Roosevelt was a progressive conservative, a man who learned to see the grey, and we credit him as saying that 'nothing worth having ever comes easy.' But how do we change the way people think? We change the way we think.

The lens we view the world through is one we think we are blind without. The balance we favour, of variety and simplicity, of binary, has made it so. Yet, if we are to stop history from repeating, we must learn from it. We can protest on the streets or petition an unchanging public, but to truly make a change, we must change ourselves. We must protest the person who faces us in the mirror, for it is they we must change. If we are to stop seeing people as ideas, rather than people, we need to change ourselves.

Changing yourself is not easy. When you argue with others, you try to change their view to align with yours. They do not want to change what they think, and neither do you. The only end to the cycle is compromise.

Now, I want you to stop again and think, but this time, don't reduce everything to two choices. In this world, there are countless people. All their ideas are different. Yet why do we see only two viewpoints? They aren't left or right exclusively; they are all in between. How can we reduce people to one part of what they, as a person, represent? We cannot, that's what.

We need to change; that much is true. Not others, ourselves. We need to stop reducing everything into binary – we are not computers, calculating without emotion. We are humans, among other humans, and every single person has their own way of thinking. If we are to understand the people around us, we must stop thinking with such a closed mind.

We have painted the world in black and white because we find it stressful, scary, to consider the grey in between. We lose our ability to compromise, to consider possibilities other than what we want to consider, out of fear. Albert Einstein, one of history's greatest minds, quoted, "The world as we have created it is a

process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.” Changing the world begins with the individual.

The truth is, people will always disagree, and there are always situations where you will be forced to choose between two options. But the greatest step towards stopping seeing in black and white – to open the infinite possibilities of the universe – is to stop and think. Think about everything. Think about other people’s perspectives. Nobody is right or wrong.

Protest is making change, yet we don’t like change. But if we fail to change – if we fail to learn – we repeat the mistakes we and countless others have made before. We must compromise on ideas without compromising our morals, and stop considering people as being on the other side of the fence; the grass is greenest when we stop and notice it for once.

I want you to close your eyes and then open them again. Is what you see just black and white? It should not be. Nothing is. We just need to stop seeing it so. We need to change the way we think, to change ourselves.