



UNDERVISNINGS
MINISTERIET
STYRELSEN FOR
UNDERVISNING OG KVALITET

Engelsk A

Studentereksamen

Gammel ordning

2. delprøve

kl. 9.00 - 14.00

Tirsdag den 4. december 2018
kl. 9.00 - 14.00

Answer either A or B

A – Fiction

Write an analytical essay (900-1200 words) in which you analyse and interpret Kathy Stevens' short story "This Is All Mostly True".

Part of your essay must focus on the main conflict and on the role of fiction in the story.

Text

Kathy Stevens, "This Is All Mostly True", 2017 page 2

B – Non-fiction

Write an analytical essay (900-1200 words) in which you analyse and comment on Meghan Markle's article "I'm More Than An 'Other'".

Part of your essay must focus on how the writer engages her reader, and on the question of identity raised in the text.

Text

Meghan Markle, "I'm More Than An 'Other'", 2015. page 7

*Teksternes ortografi og tegnsætning følger forlæggene. Trykfejl er dog rettet.
Opsætningen følger ikke nødvendigvis forlæggene. Dog følges forlægget nøje, hvor
opsætningen på den ene eller anden måde indgår i opgaven.*

A – Fiction

Kathy Stevens (born 1991) is a British writer.

Kathy Stevens

This Is All Mostly True

Mum says lying is wrong; Dad says white lies are okay; Stacie says fiction is lies and fiction is the best thing in the world but your mum's got a point.

Mum says to be polite and not have seconds unless I'm genuinely hungry.

Dad says to have fun, always plan ahead and wear the sort of shoes that I could run
5 in if I needed to suddenly. Dad and I watch zombie films whenever Mum's out with the girls (it's our thing). The girls are all older than Mum; they have a lot of fun but rarely plan ahead, and in the shoes they wear they'll be the first to get their brains scooped out come the zombie apocalypse.

Mum's out tonight with the girls – she's just left. She said she's going to the bingo and
10 will be back before ten. This means she'll be going out clubbing and will be back after one. Mum's rubbish at planning ahead, and she tells lies of all colours.

She drinks too bloody much, is what Dad says.

I drink because your father's a cheating bastard, is what Mum says.

They don't say these things to each other. They say it to themselves, and to me if I
15 happen to be there at the time.

I like to watch Mum getting dressed in the morning. I sit on her uncomfortable, white-silk kidney seat and watch as she stretches and wiggles into her tights. I don't like to watch her get dressed when she's been out with the girls the night before because she often puts her foot right through her tights and they rip and she swears and shouts and
20 her jagged big toenail sticks right through the nylon and I get upset and have an episode.

I've only kept with him because of you, Mum says, because I love you very much.

Mum feels obliged, because of me, to keep trying to love Dad. I'm an obligation.

Stacie taught me that word and what it means. Stacie didn't say that I am an obligation, because Stacie's very careful with the truth. I like Stacie. She's thirty-three and quite
25 poor, and she's got short blonde hair with pink ends and wears the most sensible shoes I've ever seen.

Dad calls Stacie 'lass'.

Dad's forty-four.

Thirty-three and forty-four are good numbers.

30 Mum's fifty-three which means she can't have any more babies. She had me fourteen years ago. I'm her first and last. Sometimes Mum sings My first, my last, my everything¹, to me and hugs me a lot. Sometimes she tells me to stop being weird and go

¹ *My first, my last, my everything*: from a song recorded by Barry White in 1974

away, especially when I'm watching her get dressed. She says stop it when we're in the supermarket or a park or in town and I start having an episode.

35 Dad says okay then, over and over. Okay then, okay then, okay then... like that.

I don't tend to have episodes when Stacie's over, so I can't remember what she says.

It's raining. I should go downstairs because there's washing on the line and Mum said not to forget to take it in if it rains. Dad always forgets. I forget too, but Mum tells us both so hopefully one of us will remember. She says for fuck's sake when we both forget
40 to take the washing in.

Remembering to get the washing in when it rains is a 'basic thing'; I need to try to remember to be better at 'basic things'.

At least you've an excuse, is what Mum says to me when she's calmed down.

You've no excuse at all, she tells Dad.

45 I look out of my window.

The window's got flecks of drizzly grey rain on it, making the garden beyond it look greyer than it really is. The flowers in their beds are mostly dead or dying, but there's a crop of yellow roses which shine through the general greyness.

This is a good way of describing the window and the rain and the garden.

50 Stacie says I'm getting red hot at describing things and if she doesn't watch it I'll get a novel published before she does. This is a type of lie, but it's the nice type that friends tell each other. Me and Stacie are friends; we only tell nice lies.

Through the window, I can see the washing is still on the line.

I go downstairs.

55 I call to Dad and he says What?

Dad's having a fag out of the open front door. This is technically breaking a house rule, because he's smoking and his feet are on the carpet. Even though the wind is whipping the smoke away as soon as it leaves his nose and mouth, it's still breaking a house rule because his feet are on the carpet and that's what counts. Dad smokes and
60 Mum drinks. I don't do anything. I wonder what it'd be like if Dad drank and Mum smoked. I think it'd be quieter.

I tell Dad the washing's on the line.

He says Okay, well.

I say I'll get it in.

65 He says Thanks Chuckyegg. This is one of his names for me.

I get the basket from beside the machine in the utility and unlock the back door and go out into the thrashing, wet cold. Stacie would like this description. If I remember, I'll write it in my ideas book and tell her it later, so she can steal it for one of her stories if she wants to. Mum says stealing is wrong, like lying or smoking with your feet on the
70 carpet, but Mum doesn't understand about fiction. Stacie steals my ideas all the time but she asks me first and I always say OK. She sometimes steals the whole of me, to be a character in one of her stories. I don't mind being stolen by Stacie. Stolen by Stacie, that's alliteration. Alliteration is effective when used sparingly.

I begin taking the clothes off the line. This is a plot point. I could just say I took the
75 clothes off the line, but Stacie says that by using ‘begin’ before an action or activity, it suggests that something will happen while the action or activity is being done by the protagonist.

A protagonist can be anyone interesting who you’d like to follow around.

Nobody ever follows me around, apart from the neighbour’s dog, Heinrich. And
80 that’s only because I throw treats over the hedge for him and look after him when the neighbours are away.

Heinrich is a German name. The neighbours aren’t German. Heinrich’s name is ironic. I don’t know how Heinrich would feel if he knew he had an ironic name.

I’m half-way through removing the washing from the line when a very good-looking
85 boy comes into the garden through the side gate and right up to me and says You’re ever so pretty, would you like to be my date for my friend’s party. I drop a sock.

This is called action.

It hasn’t really happened, so it’s a kind of lie, but it could have done, which means it’s credible. Credible lies are just fine in fiction.

90 If the boy was ugly, the author – that’s me – would have to work harder at giving him a three-dimensional personality so that the reader can invest in him.

He could be someone I know or a stranger.

He could even be a zombie.

If I wanted to introduce some emotional complexity, he could be the zombie of
95 someone I know. That way, I’d be scared for my life but also sad about killing him.

Maybe Dad would hear a commotion from where he’s having a fag at the front of the house and run around the back to save me.

The zombie could kill Dad or... for even more emotional complexity, it could bite Dad and then Dad could kill it but later I’d have to kill Dad. That would be a major plot
100 point and emotionally complex. If I didn’t notice Dad’s bite but the reader did, that’d be called dramatic irony. Dramatic irony is different to regular irony.

But then, if Dad was still having a cigarette out of the front door at the time the zombie came into the back garden via the side gate, Dad would’ve seen it and a whole lot of action would have been avoided.

105 Fiction is complicated. But Stacie says it’s easier than real life.

I’ve finished taking the washing down. I haven’t folded anything because it’s not yet dry. I’m using my initiative.

As I go inside, I linger for a moment at the back door. One foot on the concrete step, one on the lino inside. The rain has stopped already; I needn’t have bothered getting the
110 washing in at all. I hear Heinrich’s bark from behind the neighbour’s hedge. Everything smells of petrichor¹.

This is excellent writing.

The scene takes place in the fictive present (me on the step) while also alluding to an

¹ the smell after rain

alternative future in which I hadn't brought in the washing, and Mum never noticed. The
 115 bit about Heinrich barking is good because we've heard about him earlier, and the bark suggests the passage of time.

Also, it's a moment of introspection.

Readers love introspection because it's like listening to a friend, and a lot of readers are lonely.

120 The use of petrichor is a gamble, because most people won't know what it means. But one difficult word shouldn't put off most readers.

Writing stories is like *The Emperor's New Clothes*¹, Stacie told me before I wrote anything at all. She said Nobody wants to admit their ignorance. I wish everyone explained things like Stacie does, I'd never be confused again.

125 Stacie left three hours ago, before Mum. It still smells of Stacie in the hall. Her perfume is called patchouli. Mum says drug addicts wear patchouli to hide the smell of marijuana. Mum says mean things sometimes but she can't help it because she's sad. Nobody told me this so it could be wrong. It might be wrong but it's not a lie.

What's the movie, I ask Dad who's finished smoking and is in the kitchen making
 130 malted milk.

Malted milk is our favourite drink. And it's alliteration.

Lady's choice, says Dad.

Dawn of the Dead, I say.

Not again, says Dad.

135 *Evil Dead*², I say.

Hmm, says Dad.

Evil Dead 2, I say.

Sold to the little lady in the camouflage onesie³, says Dad.

I'm the little lady in the camouflage onesie, so I go into the living room and find
 140 the film, pop it into the DVD player and read the back as I wait for Dad and the malted milk.

I've seen *Dawn of the Dead* twelve times and *Evil Dead* seven times. I've only seen *Evil Dead 2* three times, so I don't know it verbatim yet. Verbatim is a great word; it's Latin and most people know what it means.

145 My favourite movie is *Shaun of the Dead*⁴, but Dad won't watch it with me anymore because we've seen it nineteen times and he's sick to the back teeth. Mum thinks it's strange that all our favourite movies have 'dead' in the title.

Is there extra sugar in it, I ask when Dad comes in and hands me my mug.

Nooo, he says in a silly voice and winks. This means there is.

150 People lie all the time and it's not always bad. Lies can be funny, like Dad lying about the sugar. Lies are only really bad when the stakes are high.

¹ *The Emperor's New Clothes*: a story by Hans Christian Andersen

² *Dawn of the Dead*, *Evil Dead*: zombie films

³ a casual jumpsuit

⁴ *Shaun of the Dead*: a comedy horror film

You can kill a vampire with a stake, but not a zombie. You have to cut a zombie's head off, or shoot them through the brain with a large calibre bullet, or blow them up. I'm about to press play on the remote control, but change my mind.

155 What is it, says Dad.
Don't know, I say.
This is a lie.
Go on, I want to see this flick. I'm dying to know what happens, says Dad.
This is a joke.

160 I told Stacie she's my best friend today, I say.
Oh, says Dad.
Yes, I say.
Dad puts his malted milk on the coffee table between us. The mug says: BEST DAD IN THE WORLD.

165 This is a lie.
That was a nice thing to say, he says.
Yes, I say.
What did she say, he says.
She said, you too, I say.

170 That's great, he says.
It's a lie, I say.
Elsie, your leg, he says.
I know, I say.
Have you taken your meds, he says.

175 Yes, I say.
This is a lie.
She's only my friend because I can't go to school and you and Mum pay her to come here, I say.
My foot is banging against the leg of the coffee table and it's hurting but it won't stop

180 however much I tell it to.
Dad moves his malted milk from the table to the floor. A safe distance. He tries to prise mine from my hands but my fingers have gone stiff and won't move an inch. This is a cliché. Clichés are a sign of bad writing.
Okay then, says Dad. Okay then, okay then, okay then...

(2017)

B – Non-fiction

Meghan Markle (born 1981) is an American actress and humanitarian who had a leading role in the TV-series *Suits*. In 2018 she married the British Prince Harry.

Meghan Markle

I'm More Than An "Other"

Suits star Meghan Markle on creating her identity and finding her voice as a mixed race woman.

“What are you?” A question I get asked
 5 every week of my life, often every day.
 “Well,” I say, as I begin the verbal dance
 I know all too well. “I’m an actress, a
 writer, the Editor-in-Chief of my lifestyle
 brand The Tig, a pretty good cook and
 10 a firm believer in handwritten notes.” A
 mouthful, yes, but one that I feel paints
 a pretty solid picture of who I am. But
 here’s what happens: they smile and nod
 politely, maybe even chuckle, before
 15 getting to their point, “Right, but what
 are you? Where are your parents from?”
 I knew it was coming, I always do. While
 I could say Pennsylvania and Ohio,
 and continue this proverbial two-step, I
 20 instead give them what they’re after: “My
 dad is Caucasian and my mom is African
 American. I’m half black and half white.”

To describe something as being black
 and white means it is clearly defined. Yet
 25 when your ethnicity is black and white,
 the dichotomy is not that clear. In fact, it
 creates a grey area. Being biracial paints a
 blurred line that is equal parts staggering
 and illuminating. When I was asked by

30 *ELLE*¹ to share my story, I’ll be honest, I
 was scared. It’s easy to talk about which
 make-up I prefer, my favourite scene I’ve
 filmed, the rigmarole of “a day in the
 life” and how much green juice I consume
 35 before a requisite Pilates class. And
 while I have dipped my toes into this on
 thetig.com, sharing small vignettes of my
 experiences as a biracial woman, today
 I am choosing to be braver, to go a bit
 40 deeper, and to share a much larger picture
 of that with you.

It was the late Seventies when my
 parents met, my dad was a lighting
 director for a soap opera and my mom
 45 was a temp at the studio. I like to think
 he was drawn to her sweet eyes and her
 Afro, plus their shared love of antiques.
 Whatever it was, they married and had
 me. They moved into a house in The
 Valley in LA, to a neighbourhood that
 50 was leafy and affordable. What it was not,
 however, was diverse. And there was my
 mom, caramel in complexion with her
 light-skinned baby in tow, being asked
 55 where my mother was since they assumed
 she was the nanny.

I was too young at the time to know
 what it was like for my parents, but I can
 tell you what it was like for me – how

¹ a fashion magazine

60 they crafted the world around me to make me feel like I wasn't different but special. When I was about seven, I had been fawning over a boxed set of Barbie dolls. It was called The Heart Family and
 65 included a mom doll, a dad doll, and two children. This perfect nuclear family was only sold in sets of white dolls or black dolls. I don't remember coveting one over the other, I just wanted one. On Christmas
 70 morning, swathed in glitter-flecked wrapping paper, there I found my Heart Family: a black mom doll, a white dad doll, and a child in each colour. My dad had taken the sets apart and customised
 75 my family.

Fast-forward to the seventh grade and my parents couldn't protect me as much as they could when I was younger. There was a mandatory census I had to complete in my English class – you had to check one of the boxes to indicate your ethnicity: white, black, Hispanic or Asian. There I was (my curly hair, my freckled face, my pale skin, my mixed race)
 85 looking down at these boxes, not wanting to mess up, but not knowing what to do. You could only choose one, but that would be to choose one parent over the other – and one half of myself over the
 90 other. My teacher told me to check the box for Caucasian. "Because that's how you look, Meghan," she said. I put down my pen. Not as an act of defiance, but rather a symptom of my confusion. I
 95 couldn't bring myself to do that, to picture the pit-in-her-belly sadness my mother would feel if she were to find out. So, I didn't tick a box. I left my identity blank.

When I went home that night, I told
 100 my dad what had happened. He said the words that have always stayed with me:

"If that happens again, you draw your own box."

I never saw my father angry, but in
 105 that moment I could see the blotchiness of his skin crawling from pink to red. It made the green of his eyes pop and his brow was weighted at the thought of his daughter being prey to ignorance.
 110 Growing up in a homogeneous community in Pennsylvania, the concept of marrying an African-American woman was not on the cards for my dad. But he saw beyond what was put in front of him
 115 in that small-sized (and, perhaps, small-minded) town, and he wanted me to see beyond that census placed in front of me. He wanted me to find my own truth.

And I tried. Navigating closed-
 120 mindedness to the tune of a dorm mate I met my first week at university who asked if my parents were still together. "You said your mom is black and your dad is white, right?" she said. I smiled meekly, waiting for what could possibly come out of her pursed lips next. "And they're divorced?" I nodded. "Oh, well that makes sense." To this day, I still don't fully understand what she meant by that,
 130 but I understood the implication. And I drew back: I was scared to open this Pandora's box¹ of discrimination, so I sat stifled, swallowing my voice.

I was home in LA on a college break
 135 when my mom was called the "N" word². We were leaving a concert and she wasn't pulling out of a parking space quickly enough for another driver. My skin rushed with heat as I looked to my mom. Her
 140 eyes welling with hateful tears, I could

¹ *Pandora's box*: a process that, if started, will cause many problems

² the "N" word: nigger

only breathe out a whisper of words, so hushed they were barely audible: “It’s OK, Mommy.” I was trying to temper the rage-filled air permeating our small silver
 145 Volvo. Los Angeles had been plagued with the racially charged Rodney King and Reginald Denny¹ cases just years before, when riots had flooded our streets, filling the sky with ash that flaked down
 150 like apocalyptic snow; I shared my mom’s heartache, but I wanted us to be safe. We drove home in deafening silence, her chocolate knuckles pale from gripping the wheel so tightly.

155 It’s either ironic or apropos that in this world of not fitting in, and of harbouring my emotions so tightly under my ethnically nondescript (and not so thick) skin, that I would decide to become an
 160 actress. There couldn’t possibly be a more label-driven industry than acting, seeing as every audition comes with a character breakdown: “Beautiful, sassy, Latina, 20s”; “African American, urban, pretty,
 165 early 30s”; “Caucasian, blonde, modern girl next door”. Every role has a label; every casting is for something specific. But perhaps it is through this craft that I found my voice.

170 Being “ethnically ambiguous”, as I was pegged in the industry, meant I could audition for virtually any role. Morphing from Latina when I was dressed in red, to African American when in mustard
 175 yellow; my closet filled with fashionable frocks to make me look as racially varied as an Eighties Benetton² poster. Sadly, it didn’t matter: I wasn’t black enough for the black roles and I wasn’t white enough

180 for the white ones, leaving me somewhere in the middle as the ethnic chameleon who couldn’t book a job.

This is precisely why *Suits* stole my heart. It’s the Goldilocks³ of my acting
 185 career – where finally I was just right. The series was initially conceived as a dramedy about a NY law firm flanked by two partners, one of whom navigates this glitzy world with his fraudulent degree.
 190 Enter Rachel Zane, one of the female leads and the dream girl – beautiful and confident with an encyclopedic knowledge of the law. “Dream girl” in Hollywood terms had always been that
 195 quintessential blonde-haired, blue-eyed beauty – that was the face that launched a thousand ships⁴, not the mixed one. But the show’s producers weren’t looking for someone mixed, nor someone white
 200 or black for that matter. They were simply looking for Rachel. In making a choice like that, the *Suits* producers helped shift the way pop culture defines beauty. The choices made in these rooms
 205 trickle into how viewers see the world, whether they’re aware of it or not. Some households may never have had a black person in their house as a guest, or someone biracial. Well, now there are a
 210 lot of us on your TV and in your home with you. And with *Suits*, specifically, you have Rachel Zane. I couldn’t be prouder of that.

At the end of season two, the producers
 215 went a step further and cast the role of Rachel’s father as a dark-skinned African American man, played by the brilliant

¹ *Rodney King, Reginald Denny*: victims of racial violence in Los Angeles in the early 1990s

² a clothes brand

³ just the right moment

⁴ *the face that launched a thousand ships*: a reference to Helen of Troy, in Greek mythology the most beautiful woman in the world

Wendell Pierce. I remember the tweets when that first episode of the Zane family aired, they ran the gamut from: “Why would they make her dad black? She’s not black” to “Ew, she’s black? I used to think she was hot.” The latter was blocked and reported. The reaction was unexpected, but speaks of the undercurrent of racism that is so prevalent, especially within America. On the heels of the racial unrest in Ferguson and Baltimore, the tensions that have long been percolating under the surface in the US have boiled over in the most deeply saddening way. And as a biracial woman, I watch in horror as both sides of a culture I define as my own become victims of spin in the media, perpetuating stereotypes and reminding us that the States has perhaps only placed bandages over the problems that have never healed at the root.

I, on the other hand, have healed from the base. While my mixed heritage may have created a grey area surrounding my self-identification, keeping me with a foot on both sides of the fence, I have come to embrace that. To say who I am, to share where I’m from, to voice my pride in being a strong, confident mixed-race woman. That when asked to choose my ethnicity in a questionnaire as in my seventh grade class, or these days to check “Other”, I simply say: “Sorry, world, this is not *Lost* and I am not one of The Others¹. I am enough exactly as I am.”

Just as black and white, when mixed, make grey, in many ways that’s what it did to my self-identity: it created a murky area of who I was, a haze around how people connected with me. I was grey. And who wants to be this indifferent colour, devoid of depth and stuck in the middle? I certainly didn’t. So you make a choice: continue living your life feeling muddled in this abyss of self-misunderstanding, or you find your identity independent of it. You push for colour-blind casting, you draw your own box. You introduce yourself as who you are, not what colour your parents happen to be. You cultivate your life with people who don’t lead with ethnic descriptions such as, “that black guy Tom”, but rather friends who say: “You know? Tom, who works at [blah blah] and dates [fill in the blank] girl.” You create the identity you want for yourself, just as my ancestors did when they were given their freedom. Because in 1865 (which is so shatteringly recent), when slavery was abolished in the United States, former slaves had to choose a name. A surname, to be exact.

Perhaps the closest thing to connecting me to my ever-complex family tree, my longing to know where I come from, and the commonality that links me to my bloodline, is the choice that my great-great-great grandfather made to start anew. He chose the last name Wisdom. He drew his own box.

(2015)

¹ *The Others*: characters in the TV-series *Lost*

Anvendt materiale (til brug for Copydan):

Angie Thomas. *The Hate U Give*. London: Walker Books, 2017.

Kathy Stevens. "This Is All Mostly True". Higgins et al. (ed.). *Bath Short Story Award Anthology 2017*. Bath: Brown Dog Books, 2017.

Meghan Markle. "I'm More Than An 'Other'". *Elle* website, July 2015, viewed May 2018. (www.elle.uk/com)

