**Rationale**

This written task relates to my Part 4 study, and in particular to the exploration of Carol Ann Duffy’s feminist moral stance in her poem collection *The World’s Wife*.

Duffy empowers otherwise marginalized women in her poems, and I do the opposite in this task, to illustrate how women continue to be oppressed in contemporary society. It is my view that many women do what is asked of them to satisfy other people. One of Duffy’s poems, ‘Salome’ (Appendix 1), follows a bitter young woman in her ultimately failed struggles to break her bad habits. Accordingly, I have written a series of diary entries to show the feelings of Salome, committed to a 21st century, American rehabilitation centre. I have also written the corresponding diaries of her therapist.

My diary attempts to show the characters’ thoughts over time. The therapist is characterised as caring to juxtapose the narcissistic character of Salome. This highlights the contrasting attitudes of the characters. Diaries are typically private, so I was able to show each character’s uncensored feelings, expressed in an informal register. Diary entries are typically short, so I used several entries revealing the passage of time.

In order for my diary entries to be authentic, I have a date at the top of each entry, a leading ‘dear diary’ line, and a signoff. I have used colloquial phrases that Duffy uses in her poems, such as ‘hung over’ to reflect the cultural context. Furthermore, I have given Salome the nickname ‘Sal’. I also mirror Duffy’s bitter characterisation of Salome through her frequent change of mind, and using terse syntax. I have included references to the poem, such as the ‘glitter’ in eyes at the end to suggest that Salome will change her mind.

**290 words**

**Written Task 1**

*27 March 2014*

Dear Diary,

I am new to this whole diary thing, but I read online that it helps to write about what you’re feeling. I’ve just checked myself into rehab. What was I thinking, you ask? I’ll tell you. I woke up this morning with yet another head on the pillow beside me (I think his name was Andrew) and I felt as guilty as always; vowed to change, as always. But, this time, I didn’t have any damned toast OR tea at home AND I was hung over as hell, so I sat down and thought about what I was doing with my life. I decided that I needed to sort my act out. I googled ‘rehab center’ and called the first number that popped up on the page. They asked me to state officially what I wanted to have treated at their ‘world class facilities’. ‘Salome Jones: Sex and drug addiction’ went down into their guestbook of suffering. Funny, it looks so uninviting on a screen.

I should have stopped myself as soon as I sat down at the laptop, and just gone out to buy some more toast and teabags. I was silly enough to vow to change myself. Stupid, stupid Sal. Yeah, so I need the booze and the fags and the sex. They’re the only things that keep me feeling alive! I would leave this second, if only my mom would come to get me the hell out because I can’t sign myself out. Where is she?? She’s the one that keeps telling me to work at her club; that if I’ve got it, flaunt it. Isn’t she losing profit without me there? I bet she hasn’t even noticed that I’m missing.

God, I’m sick of this place already. Life’s a bitch, isn’t it? I’m scheduled for my ‘first step to being cured’ therapy this afternoon. I’ll check back in afterwards.

Sal.

Notebook of Dr. Austin Whitmoore, Head of Therapy

27 March 2014

“The patient exhibits signs of depression, coupled with inadequacy and feeling the need to please everyone, even if it does not please her”. That’s what I wrote in the official documents, but, my God, that’s not even the start of what the girl is going through. She came into my office wearing a skirt that barely covered anything with thigh high boots and a tank top, telling me that she wished she could stop, but she needs the sex. She needs the booze. I would need alcohol too to forget all the awful things that she’s done in the name of ‘beauty’. This session made me so sad to see what society’s done to young women like her. They’re forced into this kind of life where they constantly feel the need to be ‘perfect’ and often end up sacrificing themselves because they think that as long as the man is happy, they’ve fulfilled their purpose in life. Her mother isn’t helping at all. I mean, what kind of mother hires her own daughter at a strip club? Society’s going down the toilet and I’m just glad that I can be here to help as much as I can to get a girl’s life back on track.

Austin W.

27 March 2014

Dear Diary,

The session was awful, but the therapist seemed to actually care about my recovery. I’ve never had someone treat me like that. I kept seeing him sneaking disapproving looks at what I was wearing. It’s meant to look nice! My mum told me it looks nice. I might ask him to one of my shows if I ever get out of here. He can see that it’s really not that bad.

I wonder if he’s single. I could get used to living with a therapist. At least he would always be available to listen to me, which is all I really need in a boy. I’ve been thinking (there’s a lot of time for thinking here) and I think that I might need to change. Really change. I need to ditch all the harmful things in my life, and get a job. That’s what normal people do, right? I’ll get a job at a shelter and everything will be okay because I’ll be surrounded by puppies and they’ll make me feel better. Yeah. I could be into puppies, right? Puppies are meant to be adorable. People can change, right? All I have to do is to convince Doctor Whitmoore that I can change. I’ve had enough of this place.

Sal

Notebook of Dr. Austin Whitmoore, Head of Therapy

28 March 2014

The saddest thing about this session was that Salome has genuinely convinced herself that she wants to change. She came in going on about puppies, but I couldn’t help but notice the mischievous glitter in her eyes that told me that she really never was, and that, as soon as she gets home, she’ll reel in the next good looking man that walks by her. It’s a typical move by patients like her; radical mood changes. I actually have no direct control over her release since she’s paying for her treatment (we can only suggest she stays or goes) so she will probably end up leaving in the next few days. It make me incredibly sad that she can’t even trust her own mind, that her own subconscious is telling her that she has the ability to change. I tried my best.

Austin W.

31 March 2014

Dear Diary,

It’s 6 in the morning, and I’ve done it again. It felt so good. I took him (can’t remember his name for the life of me) home after my show last night! I was completely wrecked. Yeah, the puppy thing didn’t work out by the way. The one thing I noticed before I was drawn into the bedroom was the usual glitter I’ve missed in my eyes reflected in the hall mirror. I can’t believe I ever wanted to change. Oh well, I tried. He’s waking up.

Sal.

1000 words

**Appendix**

‘Salome’

I’d done it before

(and doubtless I’ll do it again,

sooner or later)

woke up with a head on the pillow beside me – whose? –

what did it matter?

Good-looking, of course, dark hair, rather matted;

the reddish beard several shades lighter;

with very deep lines round the eyes,

from pain, I’d guess, maybe laughter;

and a beautiful crimson mouth that obviously knew

how to flatter…

which I kissed…

Colder than pewter.

Strange. What was his name? Peter?

Simon? Andrew? John? I knew I’d feel better

for tea, dry toast, no butter,

so rang for the maid.

And, indeed, her innocent clatter

of cups and plates,

her clearing of clutter,

her regional patter,

were just what needed –

hungover and wrecked as I was from a night on the batter.

Never again!

I need to clean up my act,

get fitter,

cut out the booze and the fags and the sex.

Yes. As for the latter,

it was time to turf out the blighter,

the beater or biter,

who’d come like a lamb to the slaughter

to Salome’s bed.

In the mirror, I saw my eyes glitter.

I flung back the sticky red sheets,

and there, like I said – and ain’t life a bitch -

was his head on a platter.