Gould questions 2018

Answer one of the following questions. In your answer, make detailed reference to at least one work of literature.

1. ‘Novels are all about not going out of the house’ (Martin Amis).
   Either (a) Why might this be the case (and is it to be recommended)? Or (b) Write about interiority in fiction in any way that interests you. Please refer to at least two works of fiction.

2. 'Into how small a space the word judgement can be compressed: it must fit inside the brain of a ladybug as she, before my eyes, makes a decision.'
   (Lydia Davis, ‘Judgement’) 
   The quotation above is an entire ‘short story’ by Lydia Davis. Answer one of the following two questions. Either (a) Why is reading a short work of literature different to reading a long work of literature? Or (b) What do we gain and what do we lose when we place literature in categories like ‘short story’, ‘lyric poem’, or ‘novel’?

3. “Unlike propaganda, or political rhetoric, good poems can remind us just how difficult some things actually are to articulate, and how pleasurable it is not to have to know what’s going on” (Adam Phillips)
   Either (a) Can not knowing what’s going on in a poem be valuable as well as pleasurable? Or (b) Write about this distinction between ‘political rhetoric’ and difficulty of expression or opacity. Do you agree with it?

4. ‘We are constantly endeavouring to give meaning and order to our lives in the past, the present, and the future, to our surroundings, the world in which we live; with the result that our lives appear in our conception as total entities — which to be sure are always changing, more or less radically, more or less rapidly, depending on the extent to which we are obliged, inclined, and able to assimilate the onrush of new experience.’ (Erich Auerbach)
   Must literature reflect a desire to ‘give meaning and order to our lives’?

5. 'There is little consensus even among criticism's most self-conscious practitioners about what criticism really is.' (Sianne Ngai)
   Either (a) Why might this be so? Or (b) Offer your own account of what criticism really is.

6. ‘Theatre is the most perfect artistic form of coercion.’ (Augusto Boal)
   Can coercion be artistic? You need not limit your answer to theatrical works.