

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
General Certificate of Education
Advanced Subsidiary Level and Advanced Level

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9695/07

Paper 7 Comment and Appreciation

May/June 2004

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

2 hours

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the Booklet.
Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.
Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **two** questions.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

- 1 Write a critical appreciation of the following extract from the novel *Troubles* by John Banville (published in 1970). The Major is arriving at The Majestic Hotel in the town of Killybeggs, Ireland, in order to meet the young woman whom he hopes he will shortly marry.

The Major had considered it possible that his 'fiancée' would be waiting to embrace him inside the front door, a massive affair of carved oak which was so heavy that it was by no means easy to drag open. There was no sign of her, however.

In the foyer at the foot of the vast flowing staircase there stood another statue, this time of Venus; a dark shading of dust had collected on her head and shoulders and on the upper slopes of marble breasts and buttocks. The Major screwed up his eyes in a weary, nervous manner and looked round at the shabby magnificence of the foyer, at the dusty gilt cherubs, red plush sofas and grimy mirrors.

'Where can everyone be?' he wondered. Nobody appeared, so he sat down on one of the sofas with his suitcase between his knees. A fine cloud of dust rose around him.

After a while he got to his feet and found a bell on the reception desk which he rang. The sound echoed over the dusty tiled floor and down gloomy carpeted corridors and away through open double-leafed doors into lounges and bars and smoking-rooms and upwards into spiral after spiral of the broad staircase (from which a number of brass stair-rods had disappeared, causing the carpet to bulge dangerously in places) until it reached the maids' quarters and rang in the vault high above his head (so high that he could scarcely make out the elegant gilt tracery that webbed it); from this vault there was suspended on an immensely long chain, back down the middle of the many spirals from one floor to another to within a few inches of his head, a great glass chandelier studded with dead electric bulbs. One of the glass tassels chimed faintly for a brief moment beside his ear. Then all was silent again except for the steady tick-tock of an ancient pendulum clock over the reception desk showing the wrong time.

'I suppose I'd better give this gong a clout,' he told himself. And he did so. A thunderous boom filled the silence. It grew, he could feel it growing throughout the house like a hugely swelling fruit that would burst out of all the windows. He shuddered and thought of the first moments of a heavy barrage before a 'show'.* 'I'm tired,' he thought. 'Why don't they come?'

But presently a plump, rosy-cheeked maid appeared and asked if he would be the Major Archer? Miss Spencer was expecting him in the Palm Court. The Major abandoned his suitcase and followed her down a dark corridor, vaguely apprehensive of this long-delayed reunion with his 'fiancée'. 'Oh, she won't bite!' he told himself cheerfully. 'At least, one supposes she won't ...' But his heart continued to thump nevertheless.

The Palm Court proved to be a vast, shadowy cavern in which dusty white chairs stood in silent, empty groups, just visible here and there amid the gloomy foliage. For the palms had completely run riot, shooting out of their wooden tubs (some of which had cracked open to trickle little cones of black soil on to the tiled floor) towards the distant murky skylight, hammering and interweaving themselves against the greenish glass that sullenly glowed overhead. Here and there between the tables beds of oozing mould supported banana and rubber plants, hairy ferns, elephant grass and creepers that dangled from above like emerald intestines. In places there was a hollow ring to the tiles – there must be some underground irrigation system, the Major reasoned, to provide water for all this vegetation. But now, here he was.

* A "show" was a battlefield attack during the First World War (1914–1918), in which the Major had fought.

- 2 The following poems are about the passing of time, and the memories this brings, memories of love and happiness. Write a critical comparison of the two, discussing the ways in which the poets present the passing of time and its effects.

Sonnet

What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why,
 I have forgotten, and what arms have lain
 Under my head till morning; but the rain
 Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh
 Upon the glass and listen for reply, 5
 And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain
 For unremembered lads that not again
 Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.
 Thus in the winter stands the lonely tree, 10
 Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,
 Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:
 I cannot say what loves have come and gone,
 I only know that summer sang in me
 A little while, that in me sings no more.

Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892–1950)

Song

Summer is over upon the sea.
 The pleasure yacht, the social being,
 that danced on the endless polished floor,
 stepped and side-stepped like Fred Astaire,
 is gone, is gone, docked somewhere ashore. 5

The friends have left, the sea is bare
 that was strewn with floating, fresh green weeds.
 Only the rusty-sided freighters
 go past the moon's marketless craters
 and the stars are the only ships of pleasure. 10

Elizabeth Bishop (1911–79)

- 3 Write a critical commentary on the following passage, from the closing scene of the play *Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593). Years before, Doctor Faustus had sold his soul to the devil Lucifer, in return for the promise of a life of wealth and happiness. Now this period of time has run out and Faustus is waiting for his death, and for the punishment that will follow.

The clock strikes eleven.

Faustus. Ah Faustus,
 Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
 And then thou must be damn'd perpetually.
 Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
 That time may cease and midnight never come. 5
 Fair nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make
 Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
 A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
 That Faustus may repent and save his soul.
*O lente, lente, currite noctis equi!** 10
 The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike.
 The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd.
 O I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?
 See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
 One drop would save my soul, half a drop. Ah, my Christ! 15
 Rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
 Yet will I call on him. O spare me, Lucifer!
 Where is it now? 'Tis gone:
 And see where God stretcheth out his arm,
 And bends his ireful brows. 20
 Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,
 And hide me from the heavy wrath of God.
 No, no!
 Then will I headlong run into the earth.
 Earth, gape! O no, it will not harbour me. 25
 You stars that reign'd at my nativity,
 Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
 Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist
 Into the entrails of yon labouring cloud,
 That when you vomit forth into the air 30
 My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths,
 So that my soul may but ascend to heaven.

The clock strikes

Ah, half the hour is past, 'twill all be past anon.

* A Latin saying: "O run slowly, you horses of the night", so that daylight will be delayed.

O God,
 If thou wilt not have mercy on my soul,
 Yet for Christ's sake whose blood hath ransom'd me,
 Impose some end to my incessant pain:
 Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,
 A hundred thousand, and at last be sav'd. 40
 O, no end is limited to damned souls.
 Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
 Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
 Ah, Pythagoras' *metempsychosis*, were that true,**
 This soul should fly from me, and I be chang'd 45
 Unto some brutish beast.
 All beasts are happy, for when they die
 Their souls are soon dissolv'd in elements,
 But mine must live still to be plagu'd in hell.
 Curs'd be the parents that engender'd me! 50
 No, Faustus, curse thyself, curse Lucifer,
 That hath depriv'd thee of the joys of heaven.

The clock strikes twelve.

Thunder and lightning.

It strikes, it strikes! Now body turn to air, 55
 Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell.
 O soul, be chang'd into little water drops
 And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found.

Thunder, and enter the Devils.

My God, my God! Look not so fierce on me. 60
 Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile.
 Ugly hell, gape not! Come not Lucifer!
 I'll burn my books.

** An ancient Greek belief that after death our spirits may enter those of animals.

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