

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
General Certificate of Education Advanced Level

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9695/7

PAPER 7 Comment and Appreciation

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER SESSION 2002

2 hours

Additional materials:
Answer paper

TIME 2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your name, Centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on the answer paper/ answer booklet.

Answer **two** questions.

Write your answers on the separate answer paper provided.

If you use more than one sheet of paper, fasten the sheets together.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

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

- 1 In the following poem, the West Indian poet Derek Walcott (born 1930) writes about the idea that even in childhood there are the beginnings of the cruelty and pain of being adult. Write a critical appreciation of the poem, discussing how and with what effects the poet presents his thoughts.

A Lesson for This Sunday

The growing idleness of summer grass
 With its frail kites of furious butterflies
 Requests the lemonade of simple praise
 In scansion gentler than my hammock swings
 And rituals no more upsetting than a 5
 Black maid shaking linen as she sings
 The plain notes of some Protestant hosanna –
 Since I lie idling from the thought in things –

Or so they should, until I hear the cries
 Of two small children hunting yellow wings, 10
 Who break my Sabbath with the thought of sin.
 Brother and sister, with a common pin,
 Frowning like serious lepidopterists.¹
 The little surgeon pierces the thin eyes.
 Crouched on plump haunches, as a mantis prays 15
 She shrieks to eviscerate its abdomen.
 The lesson is the same. The maid removes
 Both prodigies from their interest in science.
 The girl, in lemon frock, begins to scream
 As the maimed, teetering thing attempts its flight. 20
 She is herself a thing of summery light,
 Frail as a flower in this blue August air,
 Not marked for some late grief that cannot speak.

The mind swings inward on itself in fear
 Swayed towards nausea from each normal sign. 25
 Heredity of cruelty everywhere,
 And everywhere the frocks of summer torn,
 The long look back to see where choice is born,
 As summer grass sways to the scythe's design.

¹a *lepidopterist* – a student of butterflies and moths

- 2 The following passage comes from *The Awakening*, a novel by the American writer Kate Chopin (1850–1904); Edna has recently learned how to swim, and in this extract she goes out as far as she dares. Write a critical appreciation of the passage, discussing how and how often the writing evokes the experience and Edna's feelings about it.

The people walked in little groups towards the beach. They talked and laughed; some of them sang. There was a band playing down at Klein's hotel, and the strains reached them faintly, tempered by the distance. There were strange, rare odors abroad – a tangle of the sea smell and of weeds and damp, new-plowed earth, mingled with the heavy perfume of a field of white blossoms somewhere near. But the night sat lightly upon the sea and the land. There was no weight of darkness; there were no shadows. The white light of the moon had fallen upon the world like the mystery and the softness of sleep. 5

Most of them walked into the water as though into a native element. The sea was quiet now, and swelled lazily in broad billows that melted into one another and did not break except upon the beach in little foamy crests that coiled black like slow, white serpents. 10

Edna had attempted all summer to learn to swim. She had received instructions from both the men and women; in some instances from the children. A certain ungovernable dread hung about her when in the water, unless there was a hand near by that might reach out and reassure her. 15

But that night she was like the little tottering, stumbling, clutching child, who of a sudden realizes its powers, and walks for the first time alone, boldly and with over-confidence. She could have shouted for joy. She did shout for joy, as with a sweeping stroke or two she lifted her body to the surface of the water. 20

A feeling of exultation overtook her, as if some power of significant import had been given her to control the working of her body and her soul. She grew daring and reckless, overestimating her strength. She wanted to swim far out, where no woman had swum before.

"How easy it is!" she thought. "It is nothing," she said aloud; "why did I not discover before that it was nothing. Think of the time I have lost splashing about like a baby!" She would not join the groups in their sports and bouts, but intoxicated with her newly conquered power, she swam out alone. 25

She turned her face seaward to gather in an impression of space and solitude, which the vast expanse of water, meeting and melting with the moonlit sky, conveyed to her excited fancy. As she swam she seemed to be reaching out for the unlimited in which to lose herself. 30

Once she turned and looked toward the shore, toward the people she had left there. She had not gone any great distance – that is, what would have been a great distance for an experienced swimmer. But to her unaccustomed vision the stretch of water behind her assumed the aspect of a barrier which her unaided strength would never be able to overcome. 35

A quick vision of death smote her soul, and for a second of time appalled and enfeebled her senses. But by an effort she rallied her staggering faculties and managed to regain the land. 40

She made no mention of her encounter with death and her flash of terror, except to say to her husband, "I thought I should have perished out there alone."

"You were not so very far, my dear; I was watching you," he told her.

Edna went at once to the bath-house, and she had put on her dry clothes and was ready to return home before the others had left the water. She started to walk away 45

- 3 The poems below are both written by adults looking back at childhood memories, memories of his father, and in the other of his mother. Write a critical comparison of the two poems, discussing by what means and how effectively the experience of remembering is conveyed in each of them.

Those Winter Sundays

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with cracked hands that ached
from labor in the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him. 5

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,
and slowly I would rise and dress,
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him, 10
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere and lonely offices?

Robert Hayden (1913–1980)

Piano

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song 5
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside
And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour
With the great black piano appassionato¹. The glamour 10
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

D H Lawrence (1885–1930)

¹*appassionato* – a musical term meaning 'with passion'

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