

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE LOCAL EXAMINATIONS SYNDICATE
General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary Level

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

8694/3

PAPER 3 Poetry and Prose

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER SESSION 2001

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 **one** question from Section A and **one** question from Section B.

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.

This question paper consists of 8 printed pages.

Touched with Fire: ed. HYDES (Sections E and F)

- 2 **Either** (a) In 'My Busconductor', Roger McGough writes
 'He holds a ninepenny single
 As if it were a rose.'
 Examine the ways poets have transformed the ordinary into the extraordinary in
three poems from your selection.

- Or** (b) Write a critical commentary on the following poem:

The Second Coming

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
 The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
 Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
 The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere 5
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
 The best lack all conviction. while the worst
 Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
 Surely the Second Coming is at hand. 10
 The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
 When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
 Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
 A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
 A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun, 15
 Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
 Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
 The darkness drops again; but now I know
 That twenty centuries of stony sleep
 Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle. 20
 And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
 Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

W. B. Yeats

SYLVIA PLATH: *Ariel*

- 3 **Either** (a) 'Plath uses flowers as a metaphor for the creative consciousness.'
Referring to **three** poems, discuss Plath's use of flower imagery in the light of this statement.
- Or** (b) Several of Plath's poems in *Ariel* concern the experience of illness or injury. Comment on the following poem, saying how far you find it characteristic of them.

Paralytic

It happens. Will it go on? —
My mind a rock,
No fingers to grip, no tongue,
My god the iron lung

That loves me, pumps 5
My two
Dust bags in and out,
Will not

Let me relapse
While the day outside glides by like ticker tape. 10
The night brings violets,
Tapestries of eyes,

Lights,
The soft anonymous
Talkers: 'You all right?' 15
The starched, inaccessible breast.

Dead egg, I lie
Whole
On a whole world I cannot touch,
At the white, tight 20

Drum of my sleeping couch
Photographs visit me —
My wife, dead and flat, in 1920 furs,
Mouth full of pearls,

Two girls 25
As flat as she, who whisper 'We're your daughters.'
The still waters
Wrap my lips,

Eyes, nose and ears,
A clear 30
Cellophane I cannot crack.
On my bare back

I smile, a buddha, all
Wants, desire
Falling from me like rings 35
Hugging their lights.

The claw
Of the magnolia,
Drunk on its own scents,
Asks nothing of life. 40

Section B: Prose

Answer **one** question from this section.

CHINUA ACHEBE: *Things Fall Apart*

- 4 **Either** (a) Achebe writes in Chapter 7 that Okonkwo ‘wanted Nwoye to grow into a tough young man capable of ruling his father’s household when he was dead and gone to join the ancestors.’
What does Achebe’s characterisation of Nwoye contribute to the idea of ‘manhood’ in the novel?
- Or** (b) Comment closely on the following passage, and show how it contributes to the importance of Okonkwo’s exile in Mbanta.

The last big rains of the year were falling. It was the time for treading red earth with which to build walls. It was not done earlier because the rains were too heavy and would have washed away the heap of trodden earth, and it could not be done later because harvesting would soon set in and after that the dry season.

It was going to be Okonkwo’s last harvest in Mbanta. The seven wasted and weary years were at last dragging to a close. Although he had prospered in his motherland Okonkwo knew that he would have prospered even more in Umuofia, in the land of his fathers where men were bold and warlike. In these seven years he would have climbed to the utmost heights. And so he regretted every day of his exile. His mother’s kinsmen had been very kind to him, and he was grateful. But that did not alter the facts. He had called the first child born to him in exile Nneka — ‘Mother is Supreme’ — out of politeness to his mother’s kinsmen. But two years later when a son was born he called him Nwofia — ‘Begotten in the Wilderness’.

As soon as he entered his last year in exile Okonkwo sent money to Obierika to build him two huts in his old compound where he and his family would live until he built more huts and the outside wall of his compound. He could not ask another man to build his own *obi* for him, nor the walls of his compound. Those things a man built for himself or inherited from his father.

As the last heavy rains of the year began to fall, Obierika sent word that the two huts had been built and Okonkwo began to prepare for his return, after the rains. He would have liked to return earlier and build his compound that year before the rains stopped, but in doing so he would have taken something from the full penalty of seven years. And that could not be. So he waited impatiently for the season to come.

It came slowly. The rain became lighter and lighter until it fell in slanting showers. Sometimes the sun shone through the rain and a light breeze blew. It was a gay and airy kind of rain. The rainbow began to appear, and sometimes two rainbows, like a mother and her daughter, the one young and beautiful, and the other an old and faint shadow. The rainbow was called the python of the sky.

Okonkwo called his three wives and told them to get things together for a great feast. ‘I must thank my mother’s kinsmen before I go,’ he said.

Chapter Nineteen

CHARLES DICKENS: *Great Expectations*

- 5 **Either** (a) How far and in what ways does Dickens create sympathy for Miss Havisham in the mind of the reader?
- Or** (b) The following passage contains Magwitch's description of his earlier trial and conviction. In what ways does Dickens use Magwitch's account to highlight the novel's concern with justice?

He looked about him in a confused way, as if he had lost his place in the book of his remembrance; and he turned his face to the fire, and spread his hands broader on his knees, and lifted them off and put them on again.

'There ain't no need to go into it,' he said, looking round once more. 'The time wi' Compeyson was a'most as hard a time as ever I had; that said, all's said. Did I tell you as I was tried, alone, for misdemeanour, while with Compeyson?' 5

I answered, No.

'Well!' he said, 'I was, and got convicted. As to took up on suspicion, that was twice or three times in the four or five year that it lasted; but evidence was wanting. At last, me and Compeyson was both committed for felony – on a charge of putting stolen notes in circulation – and there was other charges behind. Compeyson says to me, "Separate defences, no communication," and that was all. And I was so miserable poor, that I sold all the clothes I had, except what hung on my back, afore I could get Jaggars. 10

'When we was put in the dock, I noticed first of all what a gentleman Compeyson looked, wi' his curly hair and his black clothes and his white pocket-handkercher, and what a common sort of a wretch I looked. When the prosecution opened and the evidence was put short, aforehand, I noticed how heavy it all bore on me, and how light on him. When the evidence was giv in the box, I noticed how it was always me that had come for'ard, and could be swore to, how it was always me that the money had been paid to, how it was always me that had seemed to work the thing and get the profit. But, when the defence come on, then I see the plan plainer; for, says the counsellor for Compeyson, "My lord and gentlemen, here you has afore you, side by side, two persons as your eyes can separate wide; one, the younger, well brought up, who will be spoke to as such; one, the elder, ill brought up, who will be spoke to as such; one, the younger, seldom if ever seen in these here transactions, and only suspected; t'other, the elder, always seen in 'em and always wi' his guilt brought home. Can you doubt, if there is but one in it, which is the one, and, if there is two in it, which is much the worst one?" And such-like. And when it come to character, warn't it Compeyson as had been to the school, and warn't it his schoolfellows as was in this position and in that, and warn't it him as had been know'd by witnesses in such clubs and societies, and nowt to his disadvantage? And warn't it me as had been tried afore, and as had been know'd up hill and down dale in Bridewells and Lock-Ups? And when it come to speech-making, warn't it Compeyson as could speak to 'em wi' his face dropping every now and then into his white pocket-handkercher – ah! and wi' verses in his speech, too – and warn't it me as could only say, "Gentlemen, this man at my side is a most precious rascal"? And when the verdict come, warn't it Compeyson as was recommended to mercy on account of good character and bad company, and giving up all the information he could agen me, and warn't it me as got never a word but Guilty? And when I says to Compeyson, "Once out of this court, I'll smash that face of yourn!" ain't it Compeyson as prays the Judge to be protected and gets two turnkeys stood betwixt us? And when we were sentenced, ain't it him as gets seven year, and me fourteen, and ain't it him as the Judge is sorry for, because he might a done so well and ain't it me as the Judge perceives to be a old offender of violent passion, likely to come to worse?' 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

Chapter 42

DORIS LESSING: *Martha Quest*

- 6 **Either** (a) Discuss the ways in which Lessing presents Rhodesia in the novel as a country of division.
- Or** (b) One of the features of *Martha Quest* is the capturing in words of Martha's internal thoughts and experiences. In what ways is the following passage typical of Lessing's characterisation of Martha?

Suddenly the feeling in Martha deepened, and as it did so she knew she had forgotten, as always, that what she had been waiting for like a revelation was a pain, not a happiness; what she remembered, always, was the exultation and the achievement, what she forgot was this difficult birth into a state of mind which words like *ecstasy*, *illumination*, and so on could not describe, because they suggest joy. Her mind having been formed by poetic literature (and little else), she of course knew that such experiences were common among the religious. But the fact was, so different was 'the moment' from what descriptions of other people's 'moments' led her to believe was common, that it was not until she had come to accept the experience as ordinary and 'incidental to the condition of adolescence' as she put it sourly, and with positive resentment, that it occurred to her. Why, perhaps it is the same thing, after all? But if so, they were liars, liars one and all; and that she could understand, for was it not impossible for her to remember, in between, how terrible an illumination it was? 5 10

There was certainly a definite point at which the thing began. It was not; then it was suddenly inescapable, and nothing could have frightened it away. There was a slow integration, during which she, and the little animals, and the moving grasses, and the sunwarmed trees, and the slopes of shivering silvery mealies, and the great dome of blue light overhead, and the stones of earth under her feet, became one, shuddering together in a dissolution of dancing atoms. She felt the rivers under the ground forcing themselves painfully along her veins, swelling them out in an unbearable pressure; her flesh was the earth, and suffered growth like a ferment; and her eyes stared, fixed like the eye of the sun. Not for one second longer (if the terms for time apply) could she have borne it; but then, with a sudden movement forwards and out, the whole process stopped; and *that* was 'the moment' which it was impossible to remember afterwards. For during that space of time (which was timeless) she understood quite finally her smallness, the unimportance of humanity. In her ears was an inchoate grinding, the great wheels of movement, and it was inhuman, like the blundering rocking movement of a bullock cart; and no part of that sound was Martha's voice. Yet she was part of it, reluctantly allowed to participate, though on terms — but what terms? For that moment, while space and time (but these are words, and if she understood anything it was that words, here, were like the sound of a baby crying in a whirlwind) kneaded her flesh, she knew futility; that is, what was futile was her own idea of herself and her place in the chaos of matter. What was demanded of her was that she should accept something quite different; it was as if something new was demanding conception, with her flesh as host; as if it were a necessity, which she must bring herself to accept, that she should allow herself to dissolve and be formed by that necessity. But it did not last; the force desisted, and left her standing on the road, already trying to reach out after 'the moment' so that she might retain its message from the wasting and creating chaos of darkness. Already the thing was sliding backwards, becoming a whole in her mind, instead of a process; the memory was changing, so that it was with nostalgia that she longed 'to try again'. 15 20 25 30 35 40

There had been a challenge that she had refused. But the wave of nostalgia made her angry. She knew it to be a falsity; for it was a longing for something that had never existed, an 'ecstasy', in short. There had been no ecstasy, only difficult knowledge. It was as if a beetle had sung. There should be a new word for *illumination*. 45

Part One, Chapter Two

Copyright Acknowledgements:

- Question 2 © W B Yeats: 'The Second Coming': in *Touched with Fire*: by permission of A P Watt Ltd on behalf of Michael B Yeats.
- Question 3 © All lines from "Paralytic" from the *Collected Poems of Sylvia Plath* by SYLVIA PLATH. Copyright © 1963 by Ted Hughes. Copyright renewed. Reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers Inc. and Faber & Faber Ltd.
- Question 3 © Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*: Heinemann 1958. Reprinted by permission of Heinemann Educational Publishers, a division of Reed Educational & Professional Publishing.
- Question 4 © Doris Lessing: *Martha Quest*: By permission of HarperCollins Publishers Ltd and Jonathan Clowes Ltd.

Cambridge International Examinations has made every effort to trace copyright holders, but if we have inadvertently overlooked any we will be pleased to make the necessary arrangements at the first opportunity.