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

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **9695/72**

Paper 7 Comment and Appreciation **May/June 2010**

2 hours

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

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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.
Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

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

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.
All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

This document consists of **6** printed pages and **2** blank pages.

1 Write a critical commentary on the following passage, taken from the novel *Purple Hibiscus* (2004) by the Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, paying particular attention to the ways in which she portrays the three characters. The narrator, Kambili, and her brother Jaja have come to visit their grandfather, Papa-Nnukwu, now a very elderly man.

The words in italics are spoken in Igbo, a Nigerian language; these are explained only when it is necessary for understanding the story.

Papa-Nnukwu was sitting on a low stool on the verandah, bowls of food on a raffia mat before him. He rose as we came in. A wrapper was slung across his body and tied behind his neck, over a once white singlet now browned by age and yellowed at the armpits.

"*Neke! Neke! Neke!* Kambili and Jaja have come to greet their old father!" he said. Although he was stooped with age, it was easy to see how tall he once had been. He shook Jaja's hand and hugged me. I pressed myself to him just a moment longer, gently, holding my breath because of the strong, unpleasant smell of cassava that clung to him.

"Come and eat," he said, gesturing to the raffia mat. The enamel bowls contained flaky *fufu*[1] and watery soup bereft of chunks of fish or meat. It was custom to ask, but Papa-Nnukwu expected us to say no—his eyes twinkled with mischief.

"No, thank sir," we said. We sat on the wood bench next to him. I leaned back and rested my head on the wooden window shutters, which had parallel openings running across them.

"I hear that you came in yesterday," he said. His lower lip quivered, as did his voice, and sometimes I understood him a moment or two after he spoke because his dialect was ancient; his speech had none of the anglicized inflections that ours had.

"Yes," Jaja said.

"Kambili, you are so grown up now, a ripe *agbogho*[2]. Soon the suitors will start to come," he said, teasing. His left eye was going blind and was covered by a film the colour and consistency of diluted milk. I smiled as he stretched out to pat my shoulder; the age spots that dotted his hand stood out because they were so much lighter than his soil-coloured complexion.

"Papa-Nnukwu, are you well? How is your body?" Jaja asked.

Papa-Nnukwu shrugged as if to say there was a lot that was wrong but he had no choice. "I am well, my son. What can an old man do but be well until he joins his ancestors?" He paused to mould a lump of fufu with his fingers. I watched him, the smile on his face, the easy way he threw the moulded morsel out toward the garden, where parched herbs swayed in the light breeze, asking Ani, the god of the land, to eat with him. "My legs ache often. Your Aunty Ifeoma brings me medicine when she can put the money together. But I am an old man; if it is not my legs that ache, it will be my hands."

"Will Aunty Ifeoma and her children come back this year?" I asked.

Papa-Nnukwu scratched at the stubborn white tufts that clung to his bald head. "*Ehye*, I expect them tomorrow."

"They did not come last year," Jaja said.

"Ifeoma could not afford it." Papa-Nnukwu shook his head. "Since the father of her children died, she has seen hard times. But she will bring them this year. You will see them. It is not right that you don't know them well, your cousins. It is not right."

Jaja and I said nothing. We did not know Aunty Ifeoma or her children very well because she and Papa had quarrelled about Papa-Nnukwu. Mama had told us. Aunty Ifeoma stopped speaking to Papa after he barred Papa-Nnukwu from coming to his house, and a few years passed before they finally started speaking to each other.

"If I had meat in my soup," Papa-Nnukwu said, "I would offer it to you."

"It's all right, Papa-Nnukwu," Jaja said.

Papa-Nnukwu took his time swallowing his food. I watched the food slide down his throat, struggling to get past his sagging Adam's apple, which pushed out of his neck like a wrinkled nut. There was no drink beside him, not even water. "That child that helps me, Chinyelu, will come in soon. I will send her to go and buy soft drinks for you two, from Ichie's shop," he said.

"No, Papa-Nnukwu. Thank sir," Jaja said.

"*Ezi okwu?* I know your father will not let you eat here because I offer my food to our ancestors, but soft drinks also? Do I not buy that from the store as everyone else does?"

"Papa-Nnukwu, we just ate before we came here," Jaja said. "If we're thirsty, we will drink in your house."

Papa-Nnukwu smiled. His teeth were yellowed and widely spaced because of the many he had lost. "You have spoken well, my son. You are my father, Ogbuefi Olioke, come back. He spoke with wisdom."

I stared at the fufu on the enamel plate, which was chipped of its leaf-green colour at the edges. I imagined the fufu, dried to crusts by the harmattan winds, scratching the inside of Papa-Nnukwu's throat as he swallowed. Jaja nudged me. But I did not want to leave; I wanted to stay so that if the fufu clung to Papa-Nnukwu's throat and choked him, I could run and get him water.

[1]fufu: a kind of thick porridge
[2]agbogho: a young woman, old enough to marry

2 Write a critical comparison of the two poems below; both poets reflect upon the death of the men they loved and hoped to marry, but who were killed during the First World War.

The Wind on the Downs

I like to think of you as brown and tall,
As strong and living as you used to be,
In khaki[1] tunic, Sam Brown belt[2] and all,
And standing there and laughing down at me.
Because they tell me, dear, that you are dead,
Because I can no longer see your face,
You have not died, it is not true, instead
You seek adventure in some other place.
That you are round about me, I believe;
I hear you laughing as you used to do,
Yet loving all the things I think of you;
And knowing you are happy, should I grieve?
You follow and are watchful where I go;
How should you leave me, having loved me so?

We walked along the tow-path, you and I,
Beside the sluggish-moving, still canal;
It seemed impossible that you should die;
I think of you the same and always shall.
We thought of many things and spoke of few,
And life lay all uncertainly before,
And now I walk alone and think of you,
And wonder what new kingdoms you explore.
Over the railway line, across the grass,
While up above the golden wings are spread,
Flying, ever flying overhead,
Here still I see your khaki figure pass,
And when I leave the meadow, almost wait
That you should open first the wooden gate.

Marian Allen (1892–1953)

[1]khaki: the light brown colour of the soldier's uniform
[2]Sam Brown belt: part of the soldier's military uniform

PERHAPS—
(*To R.A.L. Died of Wounds in France, December 23rd, 1915*)

Perhaps some day the sun will shine again,
And I shall see that still the skies are blue,
And feel once more I do not live in vain,
Although bereft of You.

Perhaps the golden meadows at my feet
Will make the sunny hours of Spring seem gay,
And I shall find the white May blossoms sweet,
Though You have passed away.

Perhaps the summer woods will shimmer bright,
And crimson roses once again be fair,
And autumn harvest fields a rich delight,
Although You are not there.

Perhaps some day I shall not shrink in pain
To see the passing of the dying year,
And listen to the Christmas songs again,
Although You cannot hear.

But, though kind Time may many joys renew,
There is one greatest joy I shall not know
Again, because my heart for loss of You
Was broken, long ago.

Vera Brittain (1893–1970)

3 Write a critical commentary on the following passage from the novel *Of Human Bondage* by W. Somerset Maugham (published in 1915).

Philip is studying to become a doctor, and is walking home after a long and exhausting day in the London hospital where he is training; he remembers particularly the death of a young woman, one of his patients.

They arrived at the hospital, and the SOC[1] went in to see if anyone wanted him. Philip walked on. It had been very hot all the day before, and even now in the early morning there was a balminess in the air. The street was very still. Philip did not feel inclined to go to bed. It was the end of his work and he need not hurry. He strolled along, glad of the fresh air and the silence; he thought that he would go on to the bridge and look at daybreak on the river. A policeman at the corner bade him good-morning. He knew who Philip was from his bag.

"Out late to-night, sir," he said.

Philip nodded and passed. He leaned against the parapet and looked towards the morning. At that hour the great city was like a city of the dead. The sky was cloudless, but the stars were dim at the approach of day; there was a light mist on the river, and the great buildings on the north side were like palaces in an enchanted island. A group of barges were moored in midstream. It was all of an unearthly violet, troubling somehow and awe-inspiring; but quickly everything grew pale, and cold, and grey. Then the sun rose, a ray of yellow gold stole across the sky, and the sky was iridescent. Philip could not get out of his eyes the dead girl lying on the bed, wan and white, and the boy who stood at the end of it like a stricken beast. The bareness of the squalid room made the pain of it more poignant. It was cruel that a stupid chance should have cut off her life when she was just entering upon it; but in the very moment of saying this to himself, Philip thought of the life which had been in store for her, the bearing of children, the dreary fight with poverty, the youth broken by toil and deprivation into a slatternly middle age – he saw the pretty face grow thin and white, the hair grow scanty, the pretty hands, worn down brutally by work, become like the claws of an old animal – then, when the man was past his prime, the difficulty of getting jobs, the small wages he had to take; and the inevitable, abject penury of the end: she might be energetic, thrifty, industrious, it would not have saved her; in the end was the workhouse or subsistence on the charity of her children. Who could pity her because she had died when life offered so little?

But pity was inane. Philip felt it was not that which these people needed. They did not pity themselves. They accepted their fate. It was the natural order of things. Otherwise, good heavens! otherwise they would swarm over the river in their multitude to the side where those great buildings were, secure and stately; and they would pillage, burn, and sack. But the day, tender and pale, had broken now, and the mist was tenuous; it bathed everything in a soft radiance; and the Thames was grey, rosy, and green; grey like mother-of-pearl and green like the heart of a yellow rose. The wharves and storehouses of the Surrey side were massed in disorderly loveliness. The scene was so exquisite that Philip's heart beat passionately. He was overwhelmed by the beauty of the world. Beside that nothing seemed to matter.

[1]SOC: Senior Obstetric Clerk – a hospital official

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