



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

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**LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

**9695/73**

Paper 7 Comment and Appreciation

**October/November 2013**

**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.

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This document consists of **7** printed pages and **1** blank page.



- 1 Write a critical commentary on the following extract from *Native Son* (1940) by Richard Wright. Bigger, a young African American, is hoping to be given a job as a driver for Mr Dalton, a wealthy white man.

'Yessuh<sup>1</sup>,' Bigger whispered. He was conscious of the effort to breathe; he licked his lips and fumbled nervously with his cap.

'Well, I'm Mr Dalton.'

'Yessuh.'

'Do you think you'd like driving a car?'

5

'Oh, yessuh.'

'Did you bring the paper?'

'Suh?'

'Didn't the relief give you a note to me?'

'Oh, yessuh!'

10

He had completely forgotten about the paper. He stood to reach into his vest pocket and, in doing so, dropped his cap. For a moment his impulses were deadlocked; he did not know if he should pick up his cap and then find the paper, or find the paper and then pick up his cap. He decided to pick up his cap.

'Put your cap here,' said Mr Dalton, indicating a place on his desk.

15

'Yessuh.'

Then he was stone-still; the white cat bounded past him and leaped upon the desk; it sat looking at him with large placid eyes and mewed plaintively.

'What's the matter, Kate?' Mr Dalton asked, stroking the cat's fur and smiling. Mr Dalton turned back to Bigger. 'Did you find it?'

20

'Nawsuh<sup>1</sup>. But I got it here, somewhere.'

He hated himself at that moment. Why was he acting and feeling this way? He wanted to wave his hand and blot out the white man who was making him feel like this. If not that, he wanted to blot himself out. He had not raised his eyes to the level of Mr Dalton's face once since he had been in the house. He stood with his knees slightly bent, his lips partly open, his shoulders stooped; and his eyes held a look that went only to the surface of things. There was an organic conviction in him that this was the way white folks wanted him to be when in their presence; none had ever told him that in so many words, but their manner had made him feel that they did. He laid the cap down, noticing that Mr Dalton was watching him closely. Maybe he was not acting right? Goddamn! Clumsily, he searched for the paper. He could not find it at first and he felt called upon to say something for taking so long.

25

'I had it right here in my vest pocket,' he mumbled.

'Take your time.'

'Oh, here it is.'

35

He drew the paper forth. It was crumpled and soiled. Nervously, he straightened it out and handed it to Mr Dalton, holding it by its very tip end.

'All right, now,' said Mr Dalton. 'Let's see what you've got here. You live at 3721 Indiana Avenue?'

'Yessuh.'

40

Mr Dalton paused, frowned, and looked up at the ceiling.

'What kind of building is that over there?'

'You mean where I live, suh?'

'Yes.'

'Oh, it's just an old building.'

45

'Where do you pay rent?'

'Down on Thirty-first Street.'

'To the South Side Real Estate Company?'

'Yessuh.'

Bigger wondered what all these questions could mean; he had heard that Mr Dalton owned the South Side Real Estate Company, but he was not sure.	50
‘How much rent do you pay?’	
‘Eight dollars a week.’	
‘For how many rooms?’	
‘We just got one, suh.’	55
‘I see ... Now, Bigger, tell me, how old are you?’	
‘I’m twenty, suh.’	
‘Married?’	
‘Nawsuh.’	
‘Sit down. You needn’t stand. And I won’t be long.’	60
‘Yessuh.’	
He sat. The white cat still contemplated him with large, moist eyes.	
‘Now, you have a mother, a brother, and a sister?’	
‘Yessuh.’	
‘There are four of you?’	65
‘Yessuh, there’s four of us,’ he stammered, trying to show that he was not as stupid as he might appear. He felt a need to speak more, for he felt that maybe Mr Dalton expected it. And he suddenly remembered the many times his mother had told him not to look at the floor when talking with white folks or asking for a job. He lifted his eyes and saw Mr Dalton watching him closely. He dropped his eyes again.	70
‘They call you Bigger?’	
‘Yessuh.’	
‘Now, Bigger, I’d like to talk with you a little ...’	
Yes, goddammit! He knew what was coming. He would be asked about that time he had been accused of stealing auto tires and had been sent to the reform school. He felt guilty, condemned. He should not have come here.	75
‘The relief people said some funny things about you. I’d like to talk to you about them. Now, you needn’t feel ashamed with me,’ said Mr Dalton, smiling. ‘I was a boy myself once and I think I know how things are. So just be yourself ...’ Mr Dalton pulled out a package of cigarettes. ‘Here; have one.’	80
‘Nawsuh; thank you, suh.’	
‘You don’t smoke?’	
‘Yessuh. But I just don’t want one now.’	
‘Now, Bigger, the relief people said you were a very good worker when you were interested in what you were doing. Is that true?’	85
‘Well, I do my work, suh.’	
‘But they said you were always in trouble. How do you explain that?’	
‘I don’t know, suh.’	
‘Why did they send you to the reform school?’	
His eyes glared at the floor.	90
‘They said I was stealing!’ he blurted defensively. ‘But I wasn’t.’	

<sup>1</sup> *Yessuh, Nawsuh*: Yes sir, No sir

2 Write a critical commentary on the following poem by Sarojini Naidu (1879–1950).

*Village Song*

Full are my pitchers and far to carry,  
 Lone is the way and long,  
 Why, O why was I tempted to tarry  
 Lured by the boatmen's song? 5  
 Swiftly the shadows of night are falling,  
 Hear, O hear, is the white crane calling,  
 Is it the wild owl's cry?  
 There are no tender moonbeams to light me,  
 If in the darkness a serpent should bite me,  
 Or if an evil spirit should smite me, 10  
 Ram Re Ram!<sup>1</sup> I shall die.

My brother will murmur, 'Why doth she linger?'  
 My mother will wait and weep,  
 Saying, 'O safe may the great gods bring her,  
 The Jamuna's<sup>2</sup> waters are deep' ... 15  
 The Jamuna's waters rush by so quickly,  
 The shadows of evening gather so thickly,  
 Like black birds in the sky ...  
 O! if the storm breaks, what will betide me?  
 Safe from the lightning where shall I hide me? 20  
 Unless Thou succour my footsteps and guide me,  
 Ram Re Ram! I shall die.

<sup>1</sup>*Ram Re Ram*: a cry of fear

<sup>2</sup>*Jamuna*: a river in Bangladesh

**Turn to page 6 for Question 3**

3 Write a critical commentary on the following extract from the novel *Aurora Floyd* (1863) by Mary Elizabeth Braddon.

**Aurora, who is now Mrs Mellish, is horrified by what her friend Talbot Bulstrode tells her – it is believed by many people, including her husband John Mellish, that she is responsible for the murder that has recently happened in the town where they live.**

She was sitting with her cousin in the morning-room, looking terribly pale in the dim dusk of the August evening,—pale and shadowy in her loose white muslin dress. She had only lately risen after a long feverish slumber, and had pretended to dine out of courtesy to her guest. Lucy had tried in vain to comfort her cousin. This passionate, impetuous, spoiled child of fortune and affection refused all consolation, crying out again and again that she had lost her husband's love, and that there was nothing left for her upon earth. 5

But in the very midst of one of these despondent speeches, she sprang up from her seat, erect and trembling, with her parted lips quivering, and her dark eyes dilated, startled by the sound of a familiar step, which within the last few days had been seldom heard in the corridor outside her room. She tried to speak, but her voice failed her: and in another moment the door had been dashed open by a strong hand, and her husband stood in the room, holding out his arms and calling to her. 10

'Aurora! Aurora! my own dear love, my own poor darling!'

She was folded to his breast before she knew that Talbot Bulstrode stood close behind him. 15

'My own darling,' John said, 'my own dearest, you cannot tell how cruelly I have wronged you! But, oh, my love, the wrong has brought unendurable torture with it! My poor guiltless girl! how could I—how could I——. But I was mad, and it was only when Talbot——' 20

Aurora lifted her head from her husband's breast and looked wonderingly into his face, utterly unable to guess the meaning of these broken sentences.

Talbot laid his hand upon his friend's shoulder. 'You will frighten your wife if you go on in this manner, John,' he said, quietly. 'You mustn't take any notice of his agitation, my dear Mrs Mellish. There is no cause, believe me, for all this outcry. Will you sit down by Lucy and compose yourself? It is past eight o'clock, and between this and nine we have some serious business to settle.' 25

'Serious business!' repeated Aurora, vaguely. She was intoxicated by her sudden happiness. She had no wish to ask any explanation of the mystery of the past few days. It was all over, and her faithful husband loved her as devotedly and tenderly as ever. How could she wish to know more than this? 30

She seated herself at Lucy's side, in obedience to Talbot; but she still held her husband's hand, she still looked in his face, for the moment most supremely unconscious that the scheme of creation included anything beyond this stalwart Yorkshireman. 35

Talbot Bulstrode lighted the lamp upon Aurora's writing-table—a shaded lamp, which only dimly illuminated the room—and then, taking his seat near it, said gravely—

'My dear Mrs Mellish, I shall be compelled to say something which I fear may inflict a terrible shock upon you. But this is no time for reservation; scarcely a time for ordinary delicacy. Will you trust in the love and friendship of those who are around you, and promise to bear this new trial bravely? I believe and hope that it will be a very brief one.' 40

Aurora looked wonderingly at her husband, not at Talbot.

'A new trial?' she said, inquiringly. 45

'You know that the murderer of James Conyers has not yet been discovered?' said Mr Bulstrode.

'Yes, yes; but what of that?'

'My dear Mrs Mellish, my dear Aurora; the world is apt to take a morbid delight in horrible ideas. There are some people who think that you are guilty of this crime!' 50  
'!'

She rose suddenly from her low seat, and turned her face towards the lamplight, with a look of such blank amazement, such utter wonder and bewilderment, that had Talbot Bulstrode until that moment believed her guilty, he must thenceforth and for ever have been firmly convinced of her innocence. 55

'!' she repeated.

Then turning to her husband, with a sudden alteration in her face, that blank amazement changing to a look of sorrow, mingled with reproachful wonder, she said in a low voice—

'*You* thought this of me, John; *you* thought this!' 60

John Mellish bowed his head before her.

'I did, my dear,' he murmured—'God forgive me for my wicked folly—I did think this, Aurora. But I pitied you, and was sorry for you, my own dear love; and when I thought it most, I would have died to have saved you from shame or sorrow. My love has never changed, Aurora; my love has never changed.' 65

She gave him her hand, and once more resumed her seat. She sat for some moments in silence, as if trying to collect her thoughts, and to understand the meaning of this strange scene.

'Who suspects me of this crime?' she said, presently. 'Has any one else suspected me? Any one besides—my husband?' 70

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Question 2 © Sarojini Naidu; *Village Song*; <http://www.capitalbay.com/poems/ad2.asp?blurb=163>; 20 August 2011.

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