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General Certificate of Education
Advanced Subsidiary Level and Advanced Level

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9695/07

Paper 7 Comment and Appreciation

October/November 2006

2 hours

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

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.
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 **7** printed pages and **1** blank page.

- 1 Write a critical comparison of the two prose passages below. The first is from *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Brontë; the second is from the novel *The Unbelonging* by Joan Riley.

A The afternoon came on wet and somewhat misty: as it waned into dusk, I began to feel that we were getting very far indeed from Gateshead: we ceased to pass through towns; the country changed; great gray hills heaved up round the horizon: as twilight deepened, we descended a valley, dark with wood, and long after night had overclouded the prospect, I heard a wild wind rushing amongst the trees.

5

Lulled by the sound, I at last dropped asleep: I had not long slumbered when the sudden cessation of motion awoke me; the coach-door was open, and a person like a servant was standing at it: I saw her face and dress by the light of the lamps.

'Is there a little girl called Jane Eyre here?' she asked. I answered 'Yes,' and was then lifted out; my trunk was handed down, and the coach instantly drove away.

10

I was stiff with long sitting, and bewildered with the noise and motion of the coach: gathering my faculties, I looked about me. Rain, wind, and darkness filled the air; nevertheless, I dimly discerned a wall before me and a door open in it; through this door I passed with my new guide: she shut and locked it behind her. There was now visible a house or houses – for the building spread far – with many windows, and lights burning in some; we went up a broad pebbly path, splashing wet, and were admitted at a door; then the servant led me through a passage into a room with a fire, where she left me alone.

15

I stood and warmed my numbed fingers over the blaze, then I looked round; there was no candle, but the uncertain light from the hearth showed, by intervals, papered walls, carpets, curtains, shining mahogany furniture: it was a parlour, not so spacious or splendid as the drawing-room at Gateshead, but comfortable enough. I was puzzling to make out the subject of a picture on the wall, when the door opened, and an individual carrying a light entered; another followed close behind.

20

B The large rambling house her social worker took her to looked dusty and neglected, the red brick walls chipped and crumbling, the pale, watery afternoon sun exposing all the weaknesses and highlighting the dingy, run-down appearance. Hyacinth's heart had sunk as she watched the place approaching, knowing with certainty that that was where she was going. She wished with all her might that they would drive straight past. This place looked condemned and dilapidated. For a fleeting moment she wondered if it could possibly be better than the modern reception centre she had just left. 5

The interior lived up to the promise of the outside. It had an air of dirt about it, a dinginess that clung to the worn and faded carpet, the discoloured wallpaper and the musty-smelling, ageing furniture. Hyacinth stood in the middle of the large hallway, feeling strange and alone, wishing she had never agreed to come. She wished that she had the courage to tell her social worker just how she felt, but the thought of returning to the reception centre after leaving so triumphantly was more than she could bear. She felt misery weigh on her, longing for somewhere else to go, that she could somehow return to Jamaica. She was glad when her social worker went to search for the woman who ran the home. 10 15

The woman her social worker came back with was fat and greasy, eyes small blue chips in her long, heavy face.

'I'm Auntie Susan,' she said coldly. 'My husband, Uncle Alan, and myself are the house-parents here.' 20

2 Write a critical commentary on the following poem, by Gloria T Hull (born 1944)

At My Age

At my age
 now
 I can see beauty
 in the deep black shadows
 of these green hills 5

Can appreciate the stealthy mold
 fuzzing up the shoes in my closet
 after fourteen days of rain

Dusk now is just as lovely as the sunset
 Broad daylight as enchanting as the moon 10

Baby lizards play like children
 about my feet
 and the drab little hummingbird in this red ixora*
 surprises secret joy

At my age 15
 now
 I have taken up dancing
 and lip gloss
 gone in for fashion
 and frivolity 20
 vamp my hair into flying sexiness

I will speak my mind to whoever dares to listen:
 teach my son about heaven and the spirits
 warn daughters about the sweet and sour
 heaviness of men 25
 crack jokes with the corner idlers when I pass
 tell brown and black people about Blackness
 babies about their brothers in South Africa
 hold hands and run, shout clearly with my sisters
 preach sun and flow to every frozen soul 30
 who chills my path

I will leap up! speak up!
 without fear of ridicule or broken bones

Crazy, you see, is the freest country
 in the world 35

Don't tell me – in other words –
 about your fears of growth and change

Don't tell me what I should have done at fifteen
what was made to look good on flighty twenty-two-year-olds
how big, respectable women are supposed to act
what I should say, what I should do
then, what will people think? think, what will people say?

40

Look
I can't be bothered with such foolishness
now
at my age

45

**ixora* – a brightly coloured shrub

3 Write a critical commentary on the following extract from the novel *The Tree of Man* by Patrick White (1912–1990). It is set in the wild and uninhabited Australian outback.

A cart drove between the two big stringybarks and stopped. These were the dominant trees in that part of the bush, rising above the involved scrub with the simplicity of true grandeur. So the cart stopped, grazing the hairy side of a tree, and the horse, shaggy and solid as the tree, sighed and took root.

The man who sat in the cart got down. He rubbed his hands together, because already it was cold, a curdle of cold cloud in a pale sky, and copper in the west. On the air you could smell the frost. As the man rubbed his hands, the friction of cold skin intensified the coldness of the air and the solitude of that place. Birds looked from twigs, and the eyes of animals were drawn to what was happening. The man lifting a bundle from a cart. A dog lifting his leg on an anthill. The lip drooping on the sweaty horse. 5 10

Then the man took an axe and struck at the side of a hairy tree, more to hear the sound than for any other reason. And the sound was cold and loud. The man struck at the tree, and struck, till several white chips had fallen. He looked at the scar in the side of the tree. It was the first time that anything like this had happened in that part of the bush. 15

More quickly than, as if deliberately breaking with a dream, he took the harness from the horse, leaving a black pattern of sweat. He hobbled the strong fetlocks of the cobby little horse and stuck the nosebag on his bald face. The man made a lean-to with bags and a few saplings. He built a fire. He sighed at last, because the lighting of his small fire had kindled in him the first warmth of content. Of being somewhere. That particular part of the bush had been made his by the entwining fire. It licked at and swallowed the loneliness. 20

By this time also the red dog had come and sat at the fire, near, though not beside the man, who was not intimate with his animals. He did not touch or address them. It was enough for them to be there, at a decent distance. So the dog sat. His face had grown sharp with attention, and with a longing for food, for the tucker box that had not yet been lifted from the cart. So the sharp dog looked. Hunger had caused him to place his paws delicately. His yellow eyes consumed the man in the interval before meat. 25 30

The man was a young man. Life had not yet operated on his face. He was good to look at; also, it would seem, good. Because he had nothing to hide, he did perhaps appear to have forfeited a little of his strength. But that is the irony of honesty.

All around, the bush was disappearing. In that light of late evening, under the white sky, the black limbs of trees, the black and brooding scrub, were being folded into one. Only the fire held out. And inside the circle of its light the man's face was unconcerned as he rubbed tobacco in the palms of his hard hands, a square of tinkling paper stuck to his lower lip. 35

The dog whistled through his pointed nose. In the light of the fire the bristles of his muzzle glistened. As he watched for an end to this interminable act. 40

Still there it was, with the smoke coming out.

The man got up. He dusted his hands. He began to take down the tucker box.

How the dog trembled then.

There was the sound of tin plate, tea on tin, the dead thump of flour. Somewhere water ran. Birds babbled, settling themselves on a roost. The young horse, bright among his forelock, and the young and hungry dog were there, watching the young man. There was a unity of eyes and firelight. 45

The gilded man was cutting from a lump of meat. It made the dog cavort like a mad, reddish horse. The man was throwing to the dog, while pretending, according to his nature, not to do so. The dog gulped at the chunks of fatty meat, the collar working forward on his neck, the eyes popping in his head. The man ate, swallowing with some ugliness, swallowing to get it down, he was alone, and afterwards swilling the hot, metallic tea, almost to get it finished with. But warmth came. Now he felt good. He smelled the long, slow scent of chaff slavered in the nosebag by the munching horse. He smelled the smell of green wood burning. He propped his head against the damp collar discarded by the horse. And the cavern of fire was enormous, labyrinthine, that received the man. He branched and flamed, glowed and increased, and was suddenly extinguished in the little puffs of smoke and tired thoughts. 50 55

The name of this man was Stan Parker.

Copyright Acknowledgements:

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Question 2 Gloria T Hull; 'At My Age'; *Daughters of Africa*, Vintage, 1993 © Gloria T Hull.
Question 3 Patrick White; *The Tree of Man; Readings*, Heinemann Education, 1971 © Patrick White.

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