

General Certificate of Education (Adv. Level) Examination

August 2018

English I

Part A

- 01.
- (a) This is an extract from the drama "Othello" by William Shakespeare. The speaker is Othello and the words are addressed to Desdemona, the handkerchief concerned being Othello's gift to his wife. The questioning is done on the instigation of Iago who has obtained the handkerchief through his wife Emilia and used it to rouse Othello's jealousy against Cassio and his anger against and distrust of Desdemona. This incident is one of the initial steps that lead to the final tragedy.
- (b) These lines are from the comedy 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' by William Shakespeare. The lines given are spoken by Theseus Duke of Athens, and addressed to his wife Hippolyta, at their palace in Athens, towards the very end of the play when all the problems have been unravelled and a happy ending to the strange mixups has been achieved.
- (c) In this extract from the drama "The Seagull" by Anton Chekov, the speaker is Trepliov, the son of the well-known actress Arkadina. He is speaking to his uncle Sorin, his mother's brother. He too is artistic, a writer and a dreamer with new attitudes towards the theatre but feels overshadowed by his mother whose love and approval he craves for but does not get. It is these frustrations that he is trying to express to Sorin in the given extract.
- (d) This extract is from Garcia Lorca's play "The House of Bernarda Alba" and features a conversation between Bernarda and her servant regarding Maria Josefa's (Bernarda's mother) behaviour while the family was at the father's funeral. The daughters too are present. Bernarda keeps her old mother locked up and treats her cruelly preventing the neighbours from hearing what she says :
- (e) This is an extract from Samuel Beckett's play "Waiting for Godot" a play belonging to the category of the Theatre of the Absurd. The words are those of Pozzo, addressed to Estragon. Pozzo along with Lucky, has run into the two tramps waiting for Godot and the tramps tell him about Godot whom nobody knows.

2.

- (a) This extract from Charles Dickens' novel 'Great Expectations' refers to the time when Pip now in London is nursed by Joe. Pip after coming to London, to be a gentleman feels himself superior to the kind-hearted Joe is rather ashamed of him but Joe never changes. In London he nurses Pip back to health despite the way Pip has treated him after he moved to London. Further, we see here Joe's manner towards Pip since he became a 'gentleman' when he addresses him as 'sir' This brings out the simplicity and true goodness of Joe in contrast to Pip who loses his head' with his advent to London society as he regards it.
- (b) In this passage from Jane Austen's novel "Sense and Sensibility" we get a glimpse of the characters of John Dashwood and his wife Fanny. With the sudden death of the father Mrs Dashwood and her three daughters find themselves left without a home of their own and with very little money. John Dashwood the step-brother though rather selfish meant to help them financially as a duty but his wife talks him out of it with various selfish reasons being put forward. This extract brings out this situation.

- (c) This extract is from the novel "July's People" by Nadine Gordimer. The story deals with an imagined uprising of the coloured people of an African country, against the white colonists. In this set-up July the servant of a more enlightened white family brings his employers to the safety of his village where they try to settle down. Maureen Smale tries to work with the local women collecting wild spinach for food etc. July tells her not to do this. She disagrees and rather childishly asks whether he's afraid she will tell his wife about the woman he had in the city.
- (d) This extract is from the novel "The Road from Elephant Pass" by Nihal de Silva's and refers to the arrival of Kamala and the captain to Colombo where Kamala faces an interrogation by the army regarding the information she claimed she wished to divulge to the army in Colombo. The Extract brings out the understanding and sympathy that has developed between the two characters from different communities, due to the close association and difficulties they underwent in their dangerous jouriey from the north to Colombo.
3. This extract is from the short story "A Temporary Matter" by Jhumpa Lahiri. Shukumar and Shoba are Indians, now settled in America. Their marriage has been affected by the still-birth of their first child but a temporary power interruption seems to revive their relationship when they tell each other personal secrets they had hitherto kept to themselves. But the revelations have an opposite effect when Shoba reveals the arrangements she had made to move out.
4. This extract given here is from the poem "A Far Cry from Africa" a Commonwealth poem by Derek Walcott, a poet of mixed nationality and as such a product of mixed cultures. The poem deals with an uprising of the Kikuyu tribe in the British colony and the violent brutish manner in which it was handled. The writer who is of mixed blood "I who am poisoned with the blood of both" is faced with a psychological problem in this contest - which side can he take? Where does he stand? a problem that can affect all people of hybrid birth under certain circumstances.

Part B

Drama

- (a) The sharp contrast in the development of the characters of Desdemona and Emilia in Shakespeare's 'Othello' which culminates in their last scene alone together, provides important insights into the different options available to wives and women at the time. Respond to this statement by contrasting the changes that take place in Desdemona's and Emilia's behaviour and understanding during the course of the play.

As the play "Othello" starts we learn about the run-away marriage of Desdemona who in her father's words was "A maiden never bold
of spirit so still and quiet that her motion blushed at herself"

with Othello who was a Moore and much older than her. Brabantio, her father, complains to the Duke imputing the use of witchcraft and charms but Desdemona openly confesses her love for Othello and her duty towards him. On the same day Othello is called upon as General of the Venetian forces to proceed to Cyprus. Desdemona goes too. The jealous and diabolically evil Iago goes there too along with other key characters in the drama such as Cassio, and Emilia is there too as Desdemona's companion and waiting - woman.

Iago's plotting is put into operation in Cyprus creating jealousy, misunderstanding and tensions while he himself remains everybody's trusted friend and help-mate. He gets Emilia to get the handkerchief, Othello's gift to Desdemona, and makes use of it to further his plot.

Caught in the web of Iago's intrigue Othello's jealousy and mistrust mounts while Desdemona's innocence and childishness and her efforts to help Cassio make matters worse. In this context Desdemona turns more and more to Emilia for comfort, support and more or less as a confidante Othello too turns to Emilia to find out about Desdemona and check on what Iago has told him. Emilia is honest and tells him frankly about Desdemona's innocence

"I durst, my lord to wager she is honest,

Lay down my soul at state.....

..... If any wretch has put this in your head

Let heaven requite it with the serpents curse"

Thus as the plot proceeds Emilia becomes more understanding, supportive, out-spoken honest and upright while Desdemona becomes more confused, helpless and dependent on Emilia

In their final scene together Desdemona questions and comments on the actions, attitudes and lives of women in Venice, about faithfulness and faithlessness. She is shocked by what she is told. She asks Emilia about her views

Des : Would you do such a deed?

Emilia : Why would you not do it?

Des : No. I swear by the heavenly light

Emilia : Nor would I do such a thing in the light of the sun. But I might do it easily in the dark"

Thus we see the different options open to wives and women at that time.

- (c) In 2001 a panel of teachers (all white) appointed by the Education Department of South Africa most highly populated and important province called for a ban on 'July's People' on the grounds that it was "deeply racist, sexist, patronising, one-sided and out dated" Do you agree with this assessment of the novel.

Nadine Gordimer's "July's People" is a story based on an imagined uprising of the native coloured people of Africa against the whites who have been dominating over them. July the coloured servant of the more enlightened white, Smale family brings his former white employers Bam and Maureen and their three children to the safety of his village. The children adjust to the new set-up easily. Bam is easy going and accepts the change; but the new set-up, the collapse of the master - servant relationship, is confusing and difficult for Maureen. July's position too changes. In his own village, among his own people he is no longer the better-looked-after faithful servant of white employers but a free man looked up to by his own people. The taking of the switch keys is symbolic of the changes in authority.

It is Maureen who faces the complexities of adjustment. Her efforts to be like the African wives are not quite successful. For instance she tries to collect wild spinach for cooking like the local women and July tells her not to communicate is a problem. Moreover July in his native environment is a person of standing the head of a family unit, the head of a small community; not a humble servant in a white household. The change causes a deepening rift between Maureen and Bam. She makes sexual overtures to July and is repulsed. She feels lost, scared, and finally when a plane is heard she runs, uncaring, just for survival.

Thus though based on an imagined situation "July's People" is a strikingly effective eye - opener revealing the possible effects that can arise when tables are turned in places where one group over-rules another. Hence the assessment mentioned in the question is far from acceptable.

- (d) Nihal de Silva's "The Road from Elephant Pass" has been described as an "effective thriller" Where "his acute awareness of our contemporary political, social and economic problems make the novel "more valuable.... than (a) mere exciting narrative" critically assess this perspective using detailed examples from the text to support your position.

Nihal de Silva's "The Road from Elephant Pass" is the story of a Sinhala Army Captain and a female Tamil LTTE being forced to be together facing difficulties and dangers in travelling from Jaffna to Colombo during the height of the ethnic war - a journey during which they get to understand each other and see one another as human beings despite communal differences. The journey starts from Elephant Pass rather late in the day when the Sinhala Captain Wasantha has to take a Tamil female LTTE member to Jaffna to be sent to Colombo as she says she has some vital information she will divulge only to the army high-ups. With the delayed start, the arrival in Jaffna is late and the vehicle runs into a deadly attack from which only the captain and Kamala escape alive from here starts the dangerous trek to Colombo which makes it imperative for the two 'foes' to depend on each other.

The lagoon had to be crossed they had to go through villages buy food change into ordinary clothes.... The Captain did not know Tamil ... he had to depend on Kamala who also changed his name to Wasu her sick, concussed brother with a head injury, who was in such pain that all he could say was "Enda thala nokudu" (My head hurts)

With Kamala taking the lead in these areas that she knew and where she had to converse in Tamil; with hair-breath escapes, danger and adventure at every turn the two made their way through the LTTE held areas. The snatching of a motor bike and papers from an EPDP member was another breath-taking milestone in their adventurous escape.

Next comes the hazardous nerve-wracking trek through jungle when Wasantha and Kamala get to know more and more about one another and begin to regard each other as human beings Kamala's enthusiasm and knowledge about the world get drawn closer to one another; they begin to understand, sympathise with and feel an encounter with the deserters in Wilpathu when Wasantha

writer's understanding of the basic reasons that have created the ethnic problem and understanding that could lead up to an answer to the problem is an added value to an 'effective thriller'.

Short Story

- (a) Of the six short stories in your syllabus which do you consider to be the most insightful in criticising hypocrisy in society? Write a critical appreciation of this story justifying your choice.

Of the six short stories in the syllabus the most insightful in criticising hypocrisy in society seems to be Chitra Fernando's 'Action and Reaction' which is set against a typical Sri Lankan background. Further though written some years ago it cannot, unfortunately, be said that the issues considered in it have changed - in fact some of them are more glaring today.

Hypocrisy in society is revealed in the story through the narration, observations and comments of Mahinda, first as a young boy from Payagala, then as a university student and finally as a young man living abroad and home on holiday, who sees the actions and attitudes of his 'pious' aunt for what they really are.

In the story social hypocrisy in general and religious hypocrisy in particular are brought out through the actions and attitudes of Loku Nenda and her fawning relations. Loku Nenda, a fairly well-to-do spinster, is the epitome of 'shradda', held up as the correct example for the young like Mahinda "How disappointed Loku Nenda will be...." Her good deeds were such that everyone expected her to secure a place 'at the very least' in he Thusitha heaven'. In fact one such 'good deed' was the donation of aloud speaker to the temple 'so that all the Payagala townsfolk could not but benefit from the loudness of Loku Nendas piety." This type of piety is widely prevalent in society.

Hypocrisy that prevails in society is also seen in Loku Nenda's 'adoption' of a little girl. Kusuma, from a very poor family. In fact the greatest examples of hypocrisy are seen in the upbringing of this child. Apparently the real motive for adoption was making provision for the future and for aging by 'training' a servant as replacement for Salpi who was now getting old. Kusuma was denied schooling, trained to do house work, taught lace making which would bring in a useful income, prevented from getting married and finally turned into a hard tough woman far more full of false piety than her mistress.

The story also presents hypocrisy in another form the fawning friends, relatives, society in general who admire and encourage these false actions and ideas preventing correction and the emergence of a right thinking society free of hypocrisy.

- (b) In the short stories you what studied what positions and perspectives are taken on the nature of the family and its role in shaping individual values.

The role of the family in shaping individual values and perspectives can be seen in the short story Action and Reaction which has been considered in the earlier answer and in James Joyce's 'The Boarding House' and Alagu Subramanuems 'Professional Mourners' In 'Action and Reaction' we see social and religious hypocrisy and its effects on the attitudes of two generations Loku Nenda's actions and views are selfish and false but the older people in the family such as Punchi Nenda and Mahinda's father admire and accept them or at least seem to do so Mahinda and his sister representing the younger more educated, more enlightened generation are critical and realize their falsity and will not accept them.

In 'Professional Mourners' we see a similar setup see the heartless class - consciousness and the death of...

The Way to AnswerGeneral Certificate of Education (Adv. Level) Examination,
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English II

3 Hours

2. (a)

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|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| (1) d | (2) c | (3) b | (4) d | (5) b |
| (6) a | (7) b | (8) b | (9) d | (10) c |

(b)

English as a second Language
 or Lingua Franca has been
 fast gaining popularity all over
 the world. It has surpassed
 other popular languages such as
 Spanish Hindi Arabic which were
 hitherto expected to gain this
 world position. The use of
 the Chinese language however continues
 to grow with world population
 growth. English initially spread through
 conquest and its spread was
 helped along by suitable circumstances
 especially economic motivation and today
 it is learnt by billions.
 English is now a living language
 language with a complex set
 of varieties, constructions, identities and
 uses in accordance with why
 and where it is used.
 However despite its popularity the
 spread of English has also
 encountered various difficulties especially those

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3.

- (1) Petya and Mikhail are both at the Chernobyl power station in the reactor unit premises or vicinity. Mikhail was getting ready to run a turbine test while Petya was soaking his feet and baiting a book in the Pripyat river outside the reactor's cooling tower..
- (2) What the speaker means is that the family weren't lucky that day and each family member happened to be in a dangerous position unwittingly a the tone is ironic.
- (3) This situation could perhaps have been avoided if they had not been so fool-hardy but had consulted more experienced people before playing around with dangerous equipment all by themselves. As the writer says "Only men with no understanding of what went on inside a reactor could have done such a thing".
- (4) The writer's opinion is that these people were fool-hardy and thought themselves so very knowledgeable and experienced. As such they thought they could improve on the safety measures. As the writer says "Only men with no understanding.... could have done such a thing" and also there was make things safer."
- (5) The writer description of the night of April 26th 1986, creates a build - up of tension starting with the two short opening sentences which have a lulling effect

"The town slept. The countryside slept" leading on through what Mikhail and Petya were doing - normal every-night actions - and then focussing on the "dangerous test" that was to end in such a great disaster. This paragraph creates in the mind of the reader the sense of impending danger; the awareness of sudden disaster which could have been avoided.

- (6) The writer's description of the night of the Chernobyl disaster as given in paragraph 2 starts with brief but cryptic remarks which create the feeling of underlying evil about to break lose - an eerie feeling

"The town slept. The countryside slept .. Ukrin was sleeping..."

But what was happening behind all this? The focuss then shifts to Petya and Mikhail about to try out a "dangerous test" by themselves at night, lacking experience, tampering with "critical control systems. The fool hardness of what is going to be done and the gathering sense of something drastic about to burst forth as the end of the paragraph is reached.

4.

- (1) The soldier's thoughts and feelings are apparently focussed on the dangers of sudden attack. Softer feeling seems dead in him and the word "concrete" would best describe the man and his state of mind.
- (2) The movement of the poem at the start is calm but not quite relaxed indicating that the guard has assumed duty and will be on the lookout for trouble. In the second stanza readiness, alertness is indicated. The guard is on edge, awaits action, is impatient for it. In the third stanza a woman has got into an anchored junk for morning ablution. The river flows leisurely. No requirement for action seems needed. But idleness has got on the guard's nerves. Action is needed He aims at the innocent women his tension eased by an unnecessary strike He relaxes. .
- (3) The juxtaposition of the actions brings out the uselessness and callousness of the Vietnam war.
Thus, they must have belonged to the lower middle class with the man pretending to be from an upper class.
- (4) The repetitive use of 'idly' creates the impression of the purposelessness uselessness of a war carried out just for the use of weaponry on which so much money has been invested and for no real purpose.
- (5) The poet obviously feels this to be an unnecessary conflict with the wanton Killing of innocents just for the use of weaponry that would otherwise remain idle.