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A Level English Literature H472/02 Comparative and contextual study Sample Question Paper

Date – Morning/Afternoon

Version 2.1

Time allowed: 2 hours and 30 minutes



You must have:

- The OCR 12-page Answer Booklet



INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Complete the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Write your answer to each question on the Answer Booklet.
- Answer **two** questions from the topic you have chosen.
- Additional paper may be used if required but you must clearly show your candidate number, centre number and question number(s).
- Write the number of each question you have answered in the margin.
- Do **not** write in the bar codes.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **60**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- This document consists of **16** pages.

	Question	Page
American Literature 1880–1940	1 and 2	3–4
The Gothic	3 and 4	5–6
Dystopia	5 and 6	7–8
Women in Literature	7 and 8	9–10
The Immigrant Experience	9 and 10	11–12

Answer **two** questions from the topic you have chosen.

American Literature 1880–1940

Answer **Question 1**.

Then answer **one** question from **2 (a), 2 (b) or 2 (c)**. You should spend 1 hour and 15 minutes on each question.

- 1** Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of American Literature 1880–1940.

[30]

Eugene remained in the furnace of Norfolk for four days, until his money was gone. He watched it go without fear, with a sharp quickening of his pulses, tasting the keen pleasure of his loneliness and the unknown turnings of his life. He sensed the throbbing antennae of the world: life purred like a hidden dynamo, with the vast excitement of ten thousand glorious threats. He might do all, dare all, become all. The far and the mighty was near him, around him, above him. There was no great bridge to span, no hard summit to win. From obscurity, hunger, loneliness, he might be lifted in a moment into power, glory, love. The transport loading at the docks might bear him war-ward, love-ward, fame-ward Wednesday night.

He walked by lapping water through the dark. He heard its green wet slap against the crusted pier-piles: he drank its strong cod scent, and watched the loading of great boats drenched in blazing light as they weltered slowly down into the water. And the night was loud with the rumble of huge cranes, the sudden loose rattle of the donkey-engines, the cries of the overseers, and the incessant rumbling trucks of stevedores within the pier.

His imperial country, for the first time, was gathering the huge thrust of her might. The air was charged with murderous exuberance, rioting and corrupt extravagance.

Through the hot streets of that town seethed the toughs, the crooks, the vagabonds of a nation-- Chicago gunmen, bad niggers from Texas, Bowery bums, pale Jews with soft palms, from the shops of the city, Swedes from the Middle-West, Irish from New England, mountaineers from Tennessee and North Carolina, whores, in shoals and droves, from everywhere. For these the war was a fat enormous goose raining its golden eggs upon them. There was no thought or belief in any future. There was only the triumphant Now. There was no life beyond the moment. There was only an insane flux and re-flux of getting and spending.

Young men from Georgia farms came, in the evenings, from their work on piers, in camps, in shipyards, to dress up in their peacock plumage. And at night, hard and brown and lean of hand and face, they stood along the curbing in \$18.00 tan leathers, \$80.00 suits, and \$8.00 silk shirts striped with broad alternating bands of red and blue. They were carpenters, masons, gang overseers, or said they were: they were paid ten, twelve, fourteen, eighteen dollars a day.

They shifted, veered from camp to camp, worked for a month, loafed opulently for a week, enjoying the brief bought loves of girls they met upon the ocean-beach or in a brothel.

Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel* (1929)

In your answer to **Question 2**, you must compare at least **two** texts from the following list. At least one of these must be the taken from the two texts given at the top of the list in bold type.

F Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*

John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath*

Henry James: *The Portrait of a Lady*

Mark Twain: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Theodore Dreiser: *Sister Carrie*

Willa Cather: *My Ántonia*

Edith Wharton: *The Age of Innocence*

William Faulkner: *The Sound and the Fury*

Ernest Hemingway: *A Farewell to Arms*

Richard Wright: *Native Son*

Either

2 (a) F Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*

‘Much American literature explores the theme of isolation.’

By comparing *The Great Gatsby* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view.

[30]

Or

(b) John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath*

‘Poverty and the struggle to make a living are common themes in American literature.’

Compare the handling of these themes in *The Grapes of Wrath* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic.

[30]

Or

(c) ‘The ideals of freedom and opportunity are central to American literature.’

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you have found this to be the case.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *The Great Gatsby* and/or *The Grapes of Wrath*.

[30]

The Gothic

Answer **Question 3**.

Then answer **one** question from **4 (a), 4 (b) or 4 (c)**. You should spend 1 hour and 15 minutes on each question.

3 Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of the Gothic.

[30]

Shaking off from my spirit what *must* have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine, tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality of old woodwork which has rotted for years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

Noticing these things, I rode over a short causeway to the house. A servant in waiting took my horse, and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, of stealthy step, thence conducted me, in silence, through many dark and intricate passages in my progress to the *studio* of his master.

The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all.

Upon my entrance, Usher arose from a sofa on which he had been lying at full length, and greeted me with a vivacious warmth which had much in it, I at first thought, of an overdone cordiality—of the constrained effort of the *ennuyé*¹ man of the world. A glance, however, at his countenance convinced me of his perfect sincerity. We sat down; and for some moments, while he spoke not, I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe. Surely, man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher!

Edgar Allan Poe, *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1840)

¹ *ennuyé*: weary of life

In your answer to **Question 4**, you must compare at least **two** texts from the following list. At least one of these must be the taken from the two texts given at the top of the list in bold type.

Bram Stoker: *Dracula*

Angela Carter: *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories**

William Beckford: *Vathek*

Ann Radcliffe: *The Italian*

Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein*

Oscar Wilde: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

William Faulkner: *Light in August*

Cormac McCarthy: *Outer Dark*

Iain Banks: *The Wasp Factory*

Toni Morrison: *Beloved*

*Candidates writing about *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* should select material from the whole text.

Either

4 (a) Bram Stoker: *Dracula*

‘The conflict between reason and emotion is characteristically Gothic.’

Consider how far you agree with this statement by comparing *Dracula* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic.

[30]

Or

(b) Angela Carter: *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories**

‘Innocence is often an important element in Gothic writing.’

Compare its uses and effects in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories** with those in at least one other text prescribed for this topic.

[30]

Or

(c) ‘Setting is always a key aspect of Gothic writing.’

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you have found this to be the case.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *Dracula* and/or *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories**.

[30]

Dystopia

Answer **Question 5**.

Then answer **one question** from **6 (a)**, **6 (b)** or **6 (c)**. You should spend 1 hour and 15 minutes on each question.

- 5** Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of dystopian literature.

[30]

Revelation is the word for a complex of thought revealing itself instantaneously with the enormous impact of absolute truth. Standing motionless with Becky, my mouth agape, head far back, staring up at that incredible sight in the night sky, I knew a thousand things it would take minutes to explain, and others I can never explain in a lifetime.

Quite simply, the great pods were leaving a fierce and inhospitable planet. I knew it utterly and a wave of exultation so violent it left me trembling swept through my body; because I knew Becky and I had played our part in what was now happening. We hadn't, and couldn't possibly have been – I saw it now – the only souls who had stumbled and blundered onto what had happened in Mill Valley. There'd been others, of course, individuals, and little groups, who had done what we had – who had simply refused to give up. Many had lost, but some of us who had not been caught and trapped without a chance had fought implacably, and a fragment of wartime speech moved through my mind: *We shall fight them in the fields, and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender*. True then for one people, it was true always for the whole human race, and now I felt that nothing in the whole vast universe could ever destroy us.

Did this incredible alien life form “think” this, too, or “know” it? Probably not, I thought, or anything our minds could conceive. But it had sensed it; it could tell with certainty that this planet, this little race, would never receive them, would never yield. And Becky and I, in refusing to surrender, but instead fighting their invasion to the end, giving up hope of escape in order to destroy even a few of them, had provided the final conclusive demonstration of that truth. And so now, to *survive* – their one purpose and function – the great pods lifted and rose, climbing through the faint mist, on and out toward the space they had come from, leaving a fiercely implacable planet behind, to move aimlessly on once again, forever, or... it didn't matter.

Even now – so soon – there are times, and they come more frequently, when I'm no longer certain in my mind of just what we did see, or of what really happened here. I think it's perfectly possible that we didn't actually see, or correctly interpret, everything that happened, or that we thought had happened. I don't know, I can't say; the human mind exaggerates and deceives itself. And I don't much care; we're together, Becky and I, for better or worse.

But ... showers of small frogs, tiny fish, and mysterious rains of pebbles sometimes fall from out of the skies. Here and there, with no possible explanation, men are burned to death inside their clothes. And once in a while, the orderly, immutable sequences of time itself are inexplicably shifted and altered. You read these occasional queer little stories, humorously written, tongue-in-cheek, most of the time; or you have vague distorted rumors of them. And this much I know. Some of them – *some* of them – are true.

Jack Finney, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1954)

In your answer to **Question 6**, you must compare at least **two** texts from the following list. At least one of these must be the taken from the two texts given at the top of the list in bold type.

George Orwell: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Margaret Atwood: *The Handmaid's Tale*

H G Wells: *The Time Machine*

Aldous Huxley: *Brave New World*

Ray Bradbury: *Fahrenheit 451*

Anthony Burgess: *A Clockwork Orange*

J G Ballard: *The Drowned World*

Doris Lessing: *Memoirs of a Survivor*

P.D. James: *The Children of Men*

Cormac McCarthy: *The Road*

Either

6 (a) George Orwell: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

'Much dystopian fiction attacks social and political institutions.'

Compare ways in which Orwell portrays such institutions in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with the methods employed in at least one other text prescribed for this topic.

[30]

Or

(b) Margaret Atwood: *The Handmaid's Tale*

'Writers of dystopian fiction often seek to satirise human failings.'

By comparing *The Handmaid's Tale* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view.

[30]

Or

(c) 'Dystopian fiction often paints a frightening picture of the future.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, explore how far you agree with this view.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and/or *The Handmaid's Tale*.

[30]

Women in Literature

Answer **Question 7**.

Then answer **one question** from **8 (a), 8 (b) or 8 (c)**. You should spend 1 hour and 15 minutes on each question.

- 7** Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading concerning Women in Literature.

[30]

I rose next morning with a feeling of hopeful exhilaration, in spite of the disappointments already experienced; but I found the dressing of Mary Ann was no light matter, as her abundant hair was to be smeared with pomade, plaited in three long tails, and tied with bows of ribbon: a task my unaccustomed fingers found great difficulty in performing. She told me her nurse could do it in half the time, and, by keeping up a constant fidget of impatience, contrived to render me still longer. When all was done, we went into the schoolroom, where I met my other pupil, and chatted with the two till it was time to go down to breakfast. That meal being concluded, and a few civil words having been exchanged with Mrs. Bloomfield, we repaired to the schoolroom again, and commenced the business of the day. I found my pupils very backward, indeed; but Tom, though averse to every species of mental exertion, was not without abilities. Mary Ann could scarcely read a word, and was so careless and inattentive that I could hardly get on with her at all. However, by dint of great labour and patience, I managed to get something done in the course of the morning, and then accompanied my young charge out into the garden and adjacent grounds, for a little recreation before dinner. There we got along tolerably together, except that I found they had no notion of going with me: I must go with them, wherever they chose to lead me. I must run, walk, or stand, exactly as it suited their fancy. This, I thought, was reversing the order of things; and I found it doubly disagreeable, as on this as well as subsequent occasions, they seemed to prefer the dirtiest places and the most dismal occupations. But there was no remedy; either I must follow them, or keep entirely apart from them, and thus appear neglectful of my charge. To-day, they manifested a particular attachment to a well at the bottom of the lawn, where they persisted in dabbling with sticks and pebbles for above half an hour. I was in constant fear that their mother would see them from the window, and blame me for allowing them thus to draggle their clothes and wet their feet and hands, instead of taking exercise; but no arguments, commands, or entreaties could draw them away. If she did not see them, someone else did—a gentleman on horseback had entered the gate and was proceeding up the road; at the distance of a few paces from us he paused, and calling to the children in a waspish penetrating tone, bade them ‘keep out of that water.’ ‘Miss Grey,’ said he, ‘(I suppose it is Miss Grey), I am surprised that you should allow them to dirty their clothes in that manner! Don’t you see how Miss Bloomfield has soiled her frock? and that Master Bloomfield’s socks are quite wet? and both of them without gloves? Dear, dear! Let me request that in future you will keep them decent at least!’ so saying, he turned away, and continued his ride up to the house. This was Mr. Bloomfield. I was surprised that he should nominate his children Master and Miss Bloomfield; and still more so, that he should speak so uncivilly to me, their governess, and a perfect stranger to himself. Presently the bell rang to summon us in. I dined with the children at one, while he and his lady took their luncheon at the same table. His conduct there did not greatly raise him in my estimation. He was a man of ordinary stature—rather below than above—and rather thin than stout, apparently between thirty and forty years of age: he had a large mouth, pale, dingy complexion, milky blue eyes, and hair the colour of a hempen cord. There was a roast leg of mutton before him: he helped Mrs. Bloomfield, the children, and me, desiring me to cut up the children’s meat; then, after twisting about the mutton in various directions, and eyeing it from different points, he pronounced it not fit to be eaten, and called for the cold beef.

Anne Brontë, *Agnes Grey* (1847)

In your answer to **Question 8**, you must compare at least **two** texts from the following list. At least one of these must be the taken from the two texts given at the top of the list in bold type.

Jane Austen: *Sense and Sensibility*

Virginia Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway*

Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre*

George Eliot: *The Mill on the Floss*

Thomas Hardy: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

D H Lawrence: *Women in Love*

Zora Neale Hurston: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Sylvia Plath: *The Bell Jar*

Toni Morrison: *The Bluest Eye*

Jeanette Winterson: *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*

Either

8 (a) Jane Austen: *Sense and Sensibility*

'Writing about women often portrays them as creatures of emotion rather than reason.'

By comparing *Sense and Sensibility* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you have found this to be the case.

[30]

Or

(b) Virginia Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway*

'Literature by and about women is often very strong in its depiction of the inner life.'

Discuss this aspect of writing by comparing *Mrs Dalloway* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic.

[30]

Or

(c) 'Women in literature are defined by their relationship with men.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, explore how far you agree with this claim.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *Sense and Sensibility* and/or *Mrs Dalloway*.

[30]

The Immigrant Experience

Answer **Question 9**.

Then answer **one question** from **10 (a), 10 (b) or 10 (c)**. You should spend 1 hour and 15 minutes on each question.

- 9** Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading concerning the Immigrant Experience.

[30]

When I woke of a morning, I was never greatly surprised to find in my bed a new family of immigrants, in their foreign baggy underwear.

They looked pale and exhausted. They smelled of Ellis Island¹ disinfectant, a stink that sickened me like castor oil.

Around the room was scattered all their wealth, all their striped calico seabags, and monumental bundles of featherbeds, pots, pans, fine peasant linen, embroidered towels, and queer coats as thick as blankets.

Every tenement home was a Plymouth Rock² like ours. The hospitality was taken for granted until the new family rented its own flat. The immigrants would sit around our supper table, and ask endless questions about America. They would tell the bad news of the old country (the news was always bad). They would worry the first morning as to how to find work. They would be instructed that you must not blow out the gas (most of them had never seen it before). They would walk up and down our East Side street, peering at policemen and saloons in amazement at America. They would make discoveries; they would chatter and be foolish.

After a few days they left us with thanks. But some stayed on and on, eating at our table. Don't think my mother liked this. She'd grumble about someone like Fyfka the Miser, grumble, curse, spit and mutter, but she'd never really ask him to move out. She didn't know how.

Imagine the kind of man this Fyfka the Miser was. We did not even know him when he came from Ellis Island. He said he was the friend of a cousin of a boyhood friend of my father's. He had our address and the name of this distant, mythical and totally unknown friend of the cousin of a friend in Roumania. Nothing more; and we didn't like him from the start; but for seven months he ate and slept at our home – for nothing.

Fyfka got a job in a pants factory a week after he arrived; good pay for an immigrant, eight dollars a week. He worked from six A.M. to seven at night. Every morning he bought two rolls for a penny. One roll and a glass of water was his breakfast. For lunch he ate the other roll, and a three-cent slice of herring.

Fyfka paid us no rent; he never changed his shirt or the clothes he had worn in the steerage; he went to no picnics, parks or theaters; he didn't smoke, or drink, or eat candy; he needed nothing. Thus out of eight dollars a week he managed to save some two hundred dollars in the months he sponged on us. He had heard of Rothschild³. He wanted to go into business in America. Poverty makes some people insane.

Michael Gold, *Jews without Money* (1930)

1 Ellis Island: the USA's busiest immigrant inspection station from 1892 until 1954.

2 Plymouth Rock: the site where the early English immigrants to America, the Pilgrim Fathers, landed in 1620.

3 Rothschild: rich family of emigrant Jewish financiers originating in Frankfurt.

In your answer to **Question 10**, you must compare at least **two** texts from the following list. At least one of these must be the taken from the two texts given at the top of the list in bold type.

Henry Roth: *Call it Sleep*

Mohsin Hamid: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Upton Sinclair: *The Jungle*

Philip Roth: *Goodbye Columbus*

Timothy Mo: *Sour Sweet*

Jhumpa Lahiri: *The Namesake*

Monica Ali: *Brick Lane*

Andrea Levy: *Small Island*

Kate Grenville: *The Secret River*

John Updike: *Terrorist*

Either

10 (a) Henry Roth: *Call it Sleep*

‘The literature of immigration often deals with the need to escape the past.’

Compare ways in which this theme is explored in *Call It Sleep* and at least one other text prescribed for this topic.

[30]

Or

(b) Mohsin Hamid: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

‘The literature of immigration deals with conflict arising from cultural differences.’

By comparing *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view.

[30]

Or

(c) ‘The literature of immigration is dominated by writers’ social and political concerns.’

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *Call it Sleep* and/or *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

[30]

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