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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 7 Comment and Appreciation

May/June 2019

2 hours

No Additional Materials are required.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

An answer booklet is provided inside this question paper. You should follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

Answer **two** questions.

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

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.



This document consists of **6** printed pages, **2** blank pages and **1** insert.

1 Write a critical commentary on the following passage from the novel *An American Tragedy* by Theodore Dreiser (published in 1925).

In the meanwhile Clyde by now only three-quarters of a mile east, and still whispered to by something which said: Run, run, do not linger! yet lingering, and thinking, this wonderful life! Should he go so? And saying to himself that he might be making a greater mistake by going than by staying. For supposing those shots were nothing—hunters, mere game shots meaning nothing in his case—and yet costing him all? And yet turning at last and saying to himself that perhaps it might be best not to return at present, anyhow at least not until very late—after dark—to see if those strange shots had meant anything. 5

But then again pausing silently and dubiously, the while vesper¹ sparrows and woodfinches sang. And peering. And peeking nervously. 10

And then all at once, not more than fifty feet distant, out of the long, tall aisles of the trees before him, a whiskered, woodsman-like type of man approaching swiftly, yet silently—a tall, bony, sharp-eyed man in a brown felt hat and a brownish-gray baggy and faded suit that hung loosely over his spare body. And as suddenly calling as he came—which caused Clyde's blood to run cold with fear and rivet him to the spot. 15

"Hole on a moment, mister! Don't move. Your name don't happen to be Clyde Griffiths, does it?" And Clyde, noting the sharp inquisitorial look in the eye of this stranger, as well as the fact that he had already drawn a revolver and was lifting it up, now pausing, the definiteness and authority of the man chilling him to the marrow. Was he really being captured? Had the officers of the law truly come for him? God! No hope of flight now! Why had he not gone on? Oh, why not? And at once he was weak and shaking, yet, not wishing to incriminate himself about to reply, "No!" Yet because of a more sensible thought, replying, "Why, yes, that's my name." 20

"You're with this camping party just west of here, aren't you?" 25

"Yes, sir, I am."

"All right, Mr. Griffiths. Excuse the revolver. I'm told to get you, whatever happens, that's all. My name is Kraut. Nicholas Kraut. I'm a deputy sheriff of Cataraqui County. And I have a warrant here for your arrest. I suppose you know what for, and that you're prepared to come with me peaceably." And at this Mr. Kraut gripped the heavy, dangerous-looking weapon more firmly even, and gazed at Clyde in a firm, conclusive way. 30

"Why—why—no—I don't," replied Clyde, weakly and heavily, his face white and thin. "But if you have a warrant for my arrest, I'll go with you, certainly. But what—what—I don't understand"—his voice began to tremble slightly as he said this—"is— 35 is why you want to arrest me?"

"You don't, eh? You weren't up at either Big Bittern or Grass Lake by any chance on last Wednesday or Thursday, eh?"

"Why, no, sir, I wasn't," replied Clyde, falsely.

"And you don't happen to know anything about the drowning of a girl up there that you were supposed to be with—Roberta Alden, of Biltz, New York, I believe." 40

"Why, my God, no!" replied Clyde, nervously and staccatically², the true name of Roberta and her address being used by this total stranger, and so soon, staggering him. Then they knew! They had obtained a clue. His true name and hers! God! "Am I supposed to have committed a murder?" he added, his voice faint—a mere whisper. 45

"Then you don't know that she was drowned last Thursday? And you weren't with her at that time?" Mr. Kraut fixed a hard, inquisitive, unbelieving eye on him.

"Why, no, of course, I wasn't," replied Clyde, recalling now but one thing—that he must deny all—until he should think or know what else to do or say.

"And you didn't meet three men walking south last Thursday night from Big Bittern to Three Mile Bay at about eleven o'clock?" 50

"Why, no, sir. Of course I didn't. I wasn't up there, I told you."

3

“Very well, Mr. Griffiths, I haven’t anything more to say. All I’m supposed to do is to arrest you, Clyde Griffiths, for the murder of Roberta Alden. You’re my prisoner.” He drew forth—more by way of a demonstration of force and authority than anything else—a pair of steel handcuffs, which caused Clyde to shrink and tremble as though he had been beaten. 55

“You needn’t put those on me, mister,” he pleaded. “I wish you wouldn’t. I never had anything like that on before. I’ll go with you without them.” He looked longingly and sadly about at the trees, into the sheltering depths of which so recently he ought to have plunged. To safety. 60

“Very well, then,” replied the redoubtable Kraut. “So long as you come along peaceful.”

¹ *vesper* – evening

² *staccatically* – in a nervous, jerky, way

2 Write a critical commentary on the following passage from the short story *The Pay-Packet* by Ifeoma Okoye (published in 1993).

Left alone in the sitting-room, Iba began to think over her planned course of action. First, she saw her spending spree as reckless and began to blame herself for not really considering the consequences of such an action before embarking on it. In the same breath she praised herself for her new-found courage in asserting her freedom.

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Her husband's action over her salary had never ceased to baffle her. After all, he could do without her entire pay packet as he earned a good salary himself and didn't seem to have overburdening extended-family responsibilities. Outsiders who knew him would never believe that he was capable of lifting a finger against his wife; in fact, in his office he was seen as a perfect gentleman – civilised, suave, courteous and kind. On the few occasions she had gone to his office to see him, some of his colleagues, male and female alike, had told her how lucky she was to have such a perfect gentleman for a husband.

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She had taken all these compliments with pretended glee, for how could she tell them what lay behind Bertrand's gentle façade? Once she had toyed with the idea of spilling the beans, of telling some of his friends what a brute Bertrand was, for to her any man who beat his wife was no better than a brute. However, something she could not explain held her back.

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Bertrand arrived home after six. Over his meal, he asked Iba why she was late coming home.

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'I stopped at the market,' she explained.

'For what?'

'We needed some food.'

'I'll be going to the village tomorrow,' Bertrand said.

'Why?'

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'Your father will be wondering what is holding me up. Besides, there is an important meeting of my kindred tomorrow.'

'Is Father ill?' Iba asked. Her father was a retired railway worker. He had a good pension. Her mother had a stall in the village market where she sold provisions.

'No, not to my knowledge,' replied Bertrand, 'but since I'll be going to the village, I don't see why I can't call on him.'

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'But you've just said he'll be wondering why you've not come to see him. I don't understand.'

'Nothing to understand,' Bertrand said and continued with his meal.

Iba waited for her husband to ask her if she had eventually received her salary that day. The period of waiting for the storm to erupt was torture to her and she wished the ordeal would happen as quickly as possible. What made the situation worse for her was her inability to predict what her husband's reaction would be.

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After his meal, Bertrand went to the bedroom to pack a small suitcase for the following day's trip to the village. Iba watched him expectantly for a moment and then went back to the sitting-room.

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Presently Bertrand called to her from the bedroom. She shuddered. She could guess what her husband wanted her for. She walked into the bedroom and said faintly:

45

'Yes, B?'

'Where's the money?' asked Bertrand.

Iba feigned ignorance. 'What money?'

'Your salary, of course. What other money?'

She wanted to tell a lie; to tell him that she had not received it; that the H. M.¹ was still ill and could not come to school. But that would be postponing the confrontation. The sooner the punishment was meted out on her the better, she thought. Now that

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she had done what she wanted to do with her salary, she was ready for any lashing. No price was too high to pay for freedom, she told herself.

‘I said, where’s the money?’ Bertrand repeated when Iba remained silent. His lower lip jutted out a little. 55

Iba said slowly, ‘I’ve spent it.’

‘Eh! What did you say?’

‘I said I’ve spent it.’

‘You’ve done what?’ 60

‘Spent it.’ She was gathering more courage.

‘You’re crazy. I want the money this moment.’

‘I can’t give what I’ve spent. When you spend money, it doesn’t come back to you, does it?’

‘Look here, woman, I’ve not got time for jokes. Let me have the money at once. And don’t provoke me.’ 65

Iba said, ‘Honestly, B, I’ve spent the money buying some food, a few baby things, and one or two items for myself. I even bought a shirt for you.’

¹ *H.M.* – Headmaster

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3 Write a critical commentary on the following poem (published in 1994) by Vinay Dharwadker.*New Delhi, 1974*

The city has spread quietly, suddenly. Everywhere
it springs up, this futile architecture, its garish forms

shuffled and heaped, its grass sprouting sparse
and indifferent, its women brittle with paint,

its wrists young and hairless, dipped into the pool
where gold reflections rise, quiver at the rims of its eyes.

5

The old scalps are dry, each hair has lost its root,
and the mouth that rehearsed its verses in these streets

now is elsewhere. The monuments are black, rainblack
and shoulderless, and the plains that once stretched

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green towards the south are grey with dust and grime.
The old have nowhere to go now, in this new

city they haven't built, and the impatient young
are idle, and don't know where to turn.

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