

2015

General Certificate of Education (Adv. Level) Examination
August 2015
English I

Part A

01.

- (a) This extract is from the Tragedy "Othello" by William Shakespeare. The words are those of Othello addressed to Lodovico who tells him that his services are terminated and he is under arrest while Cassio is appointed ruler of Cyprus. This comes almost at the end of the play when Othello has realized his folly and wants Lodovico to give an exact report of the "unlucky deeds" and to speak of him just as what he is.
- (b) These lines are from the comedy "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by William Shakespeare. The speaker is Lysander and he is speaking to Hermia, daughter of Egeus whom he is in love with. Egeus wants his daughter to marry Demetrius and has appealed to Duke Theseus to make her do so. Hermia however is adamant in her refusal. In this instance, almost at the start of the play she tells Lysander what has happened and the lines given express Lysander's reaction.
- (c) This extract is from Anton Chekov's play "The Seagull", and the words are those of Nina, a one-time aspiring actress, whom Trepliov loved but who ran away to get on the stage and messed up her life. She speaks these words to Trepliov when she pays a brief visit. She had finally realized that what matters in life is endurance. She explains to Trepliov who is also disillusioned. This happens almost at the end of the play just before Trepliov commits suicide.
- (d) In this extract from the drama the House of Bernarda Alba by Garcia Lorca, Bernarda the mother ends the play with her final comment or verdict on the death of her youngest daughter, Adela, through suicide. It expresses her narrow attitude to virginity and repression which are two main themes in the play. The extract also touches on the conservative narrow attitude towards men and the hardness in Bernarda in her final comment on Pepe "But one day you will fall".
- (e) This extract is from Samuel Beckett's play "Waiting for Godot" and the words are those of the tramp Vladimir addressed to his companion, the other tramp Estragon. This is said almost at the close of the play just before the boy comes with the message from Godot. The words reflect the theme of the 'human condition' in which habit makes people just continue living with nothing actually done.

2.

- (a) The extract given is from the novel "Great Expectations" by Charles Dickens and these reflections are those of Pip – feelings and thoughts that he had as an adult when he remembered his feelings, thoughts and attitudes when Miss Havisham handed over Pip, who as a child went to her house 'to play', to Joe as his apprentice. Pip who was filled with ideas of being a 'gentleman' felt ashamed of Joe during the visit to Miss Havisham's but years later he re-discovered true values and who his real friends were. The 'curtain' referred to is the mental depression caused due to his own wrong notions.
- (b) In this extract is from Jane Austen's novel "Sense and Sensibility." We see Elinor's sensible and tactful advice to her sister Marianne, whose ideas of love and marriage were highly romantic. Lucy Steele's engagement to Edward Ferrars has been revealed and Elinor who has known about this for four months tells Marianne, who is terribly upset about Willoughby, about her own troubles and how she kept them to herself because of her care for others. Elinor explains to Marianne who does not believe in second attachments, that it is neither right nor natural to think so.

- (c) This extract is from the novel "July's People" by Nadine Gordimer, a novel about the black – white conflict in Africa. The coloureds had risen against the whites – the masters – but Bam and Maureen Smale and their three children had been guided in their bakkie by their faithful servant July to the safety of his village and had been accommodated in his mother – in – law's hut. This short extract focuses on the fears and the uncertainty the Smales are faced with regarding their future and the hardships they have to adjust to. The tension created by the situation is brought out by the way they listen to the news on the radio.
- (d) This extract is from the novel "The Road from Elephant Pass" by Nihal de Silva. The story is about the racial conflict in Sri Lanka and a dangerous journey from Jaffna to Colombo through forests and enemy land undertaken by a Sinhala Army Captain and an LTTE woman cadre. The journey during which they have to depend on one another brings about the understanding that is needed among human beings. The extract refers to Captain Vasantha's arrangement for Kamal in Colombo. They go to Upali's home where they find that Samanthi is no longer there so the snag he is worried about no longer exists.
3. This extract is from the short story "Hills Like White Elephants" by Ernest Hemingway. The two people referred to are an American and a girl known as Jig who have met while travelling, are in a casual relationship and travel rather aimlessly visiting places and trying out various new alcoholic drinks. They are accidentally faced with the question of an abortion which the man wants and the girl opposes although she has no definite plans for the future. The girl is aware that it is she who has to bear the consequences; the problem remains unsolved; their train arrives asides the girl continues with her aimless wailful existence in a life like a white elephant.
4. This is an extract – in fact it is the first stanza – from the poem "The Poet" by the Sri Lankan writer Lakdasa Wikkramasinha. The poem gives the identity of the poet in a very dramatic manner. The poem starts with the poet presented as a terrorist causing confusion and noting the impact. Next he is seen as a soldier aiming a gun while the 'tripod' also creates the impression of a cameraman. The poet is thus presented as a person who disrupts and then sifts the social set – up and thereby creates the environment necessary for reforming society

Drama

- (a) It has been asserted that 'rightly played, Iago must emerge as the true centre of the tragedy.' Discuss this comment on Shakespeare's "Othello" through an analysis of Iago's character and function in the play.

Iago who features prominently in Shakespeare's "Othello" is generally considered to be the most villainous character created by the playwright.

Iago is introduced to the audience at the very start of the play when he is seen in conversation with Roderigo whose money he has been using on the pretext that he is helping him to win Desdemona with gifts etc.

".... thou, Iago ... hast had my purse
as if the strings were thine"

In this very first conversation we see the hatred, dishonesty, cunning, envy, greed, malice, hypocrisy, colour prejudice and other negative traits that go to make – up the character of Iago. All these characteristics are used by him with a devilish cleverness which weaves a complicated trap in which his innocent victims get entangled. Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, Roderigo, Brabantio all regard him as an honest helpful true friend, whom they trust entirely. He is a different character at different times – a master of intrigue. For instance he gets Roderigo to rouse Brabantio and then in raw language tells him about the elopement. Then once the rousing is done he gets away.

"Farewell"

It seems not meet, not wholesome to my place,
to be produced as if I stay I shall
Against the moor"

Similarly, he cunningly convinces Othello that Desdemona has an involvement with Cassio.

In fact Iago, on the stage, is the character who interacts with all the others.

On the other hand the other characters presented in opposition to Iago are all simple, trusting, with absolutely no inkling of such a nature. Othello, a brave experienced successful soldier is simple, honest and trusting and completely unaware of such machinations. He is inexperienced in domestic life and social life especially among Venetian ladies. Desdemona too is very simple, kind, helpful, loving and almost child-like. For instance we see this in her pleading for the recall of Cassio.

Desdemona :- "Yes, faith, so humbled

That he hath left part of his grief with me

To suffer with him. Good love, call him back"

Othello :- "Not now some other time"

Desdemona :- "But shall it be shortly?"

Othello :- "That sooner, sweet, for you?"

Desdemona :- "Shall it be tonight at supper?"

Othello :- "No not tonight"

Desdemona :- "Tomorrow dinner then?"

The tragedy is mainly the outcome of the simplicity and certain inadequacies in the main characters, Othello, Desdemona and to a certain extent Cassio. But it is Iago whose intrigue, affects all the characters and who moves around

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pushing the tragedy to its climax, who draws the attention of the audience. Without his interference there would be no tragedy. Hence rightly played Iago would be the true centre of the tragedy but not the real cause of it.

(b) The key role of the fairies in Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" makes it difficult for a contemporary audience to relate to this play. Do you agree?

Shakespeare's play "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is different to his other comedies and is considered to be a play written for entertainment at a function of some noble family of the time, perhaps a wedding. For instance it lacks the striking character presentation and emotions of the other plays and fairies play a prominent role in it.

Perhaps the presence of the fairies would make one feel that modern audiences would find it difficult to relate to the play but fairies are not strangers to people of today or of the past as they figure in almost everybody's childhood in stories, in imagination, in dreams. Further the fantasy – like quality or nature of this play makes the fairy presence in the moonlight seem natural. It also relates to the magical beauty of the settings and the poetic quality of the wording throughout the drama

"I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxslips and the nodding violet grows
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine;"

Further, the fairies maintain the dignity and greatness that is a key-note of Shakespeare's plays. Even when they squabble the dignity is maintained and this gives a greatness to the play which any audience would appreciate.

In the play Shakespeare presents the idea that love is initially formed by the eye and that it is causal and quick – shifting. Thus with Puck's pranks and Oberon's planning Titania falls madly in love with the donkey – headed Bottom and later Demetrius gets drawn to Hermia forgetting Helena

Titania : - "What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?"

..... I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again;

So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;

And thy fair virtue's force, perforce doth move me

Another instance of women making their way despite male power, is the case of Lucy Steele. Lucy with her poor education and hardly anything to call her own, manages to entice Edward Ferrars, who hails from a wealthy family, into an engagement from which there is no escape, but when he is disinherited by his proud mother she manages to get the new 'heir' Edward's proud brother Robert, to become her husband.

Other instances of the female characters finally succeeding despite the males seeming to have the upper hand are seen in the Marianne – Willoughby affair and Elionor's troubles due to Edward Ferrars. But in every such instance the women survive, overcome or adjust themselves and emerge with success. Hence the novel is not only about the sisters but also about the manner in which women make their way despite male power.

- (c) **"In 'July's People' Gordimer juxtaposes white families against black families in order to show racial and gender inequalities in South Africa during Apartheid." Do you agree?**

The novel "July's People" by Nadine Gordimer's deals with the Black – White problem in South Africa under Apartheid.

The story is set against a background of an uprising of the indigenous coloured or black people of Africa against their 'white masters', who had kept them subjugated and treated as second – class citizens under their Apartheid policy.

With the whites facing danger and death the Smales, Bam and Maureen, and their three children are brought in their bakkie to the safety of his home in a jungle area, by their faithful coloured servant July whom the Smales—being more enlightened than most of their fellow whites – have treated well. July's mother – in – law's hut is given to them and at the start July waits upon them as he did in the city. However among his own village July is a person looked up to and regarded with respect and not the Smales servant. This for example becomes apparent when July takes the bakkie's switch – key and uses the vehicle without Bam's permission and Bam's reaction to this move. This trend continues and various occurrences such as the loss of Bam's revolver, bring out the changing attitudes. Thus July, back in his own home living among his family members stands on his own with freedom and human dignity, while the Smales the white family he served and helped to live in comparative luxury were now experiencing what the blacks had been condemned to due to Apartheid, but of course in a much milder form.

Coming to gender differences we see the hard life lived by the coloured women – folk, and Maureen, now living among them attempts to follow their example. Yet, the women though polite to her are not friendly and also consider them to be a potential danger. Further the menfolk, like July, were away in the city working, coming home for brief stays at long intervals and having 'city women' while staying there and this meant disruption of family life whereas the Smales, the example of the whites, were a happy family in the city. However in July's village the relationship between Bam and Maureen erodes, leading to Maureen making advances to July and being spurned.

Thus with the juxtaposition of the blacks and whites we see the racial and gender differences and inequalities resulting from Apartheid and incidentally the way white children adapt to the coloured ones and their ways, could point to a solution in the future.

- (d) **Write a critical account of the inter – relationship between ethnicity and gender during the war as described in Nihal Silva's "The Road from Elephant Pass"**

"The Road from Elephant Pass" by Nihal Silva deals with the ethnic problem presented through the story of a Sinhala Army Captain from the South and an LTTE woman cadre from the North who, due to unforeseen circumstances, have to depend on each other for survival during a dangerous trek through jungle and danger zones from Jaffna to Colombo. The narration is by Wasantha the Army Captain.

When Kamala arrives at the Elephant Pass check point well past the due times there is strong animosity on both sides.

being killed. From movements. Wasantha had no Velaithan. The preparations she made were "enjoy strangling the dammed woman" He was told not to "head hurts." At this stage they were just a Sinhala army man and an LTTE cadre to each other - hated enemies forced to be together for survival.

Once their trek through the jungles started it was the captain who was apparently more knowledgeable but they had to manage together finding food, cooking, arranging safe camps. Luckily communication was no problem as they were fluent in English.

It was the raptor perched on a branch and first noticed by Kamala that led to better understanding between them. Kamala was animated by the sight and apparently knew and was interested about birds. That night after dinner the captain brought up the subject of the bird

"How did you get interested in birds?"

And then Kamala's story, how ethnic violence shattered the lives of an innocent family, came out and Wasantha saw her for the first time as a human being like any other

Later this was followed by another sighting of and discussion about birds which led to Kamala realizing that her idea of the privileged south was wrong. She inquired and was told all about Wasantha's family and education. Mutual understanding and a comradeship as human beings was established.

This was followed eventually by a gender awareness. Wasantha became protective and caring, even killing a man to save her while she became dependent on him when difficulties arose as in the case of the elephant and the crossing of the river. Finally a strong bond of love removed all traces of the enmity and contempt that was seen at the start.

Short Story

(a) Write a critical appreciation of your favourite short story of the six short story in your syllabus explaining why it is especially relevant to the present Sri Lanka context.

Of the Short Stories in the syllabus "Action and Reaction" by Chitra fernado is generally a favourite and mine too.

It is the story of a middle - aged spinster from an old ancestral family in an out - station area who considers herself to be highly religious and a paragon of respectability and virtue. The family members of her own generation think so too. But what her 'virtues' are in reality and how they affect others is seen critically by her nephew as a young boy, as a university student and as a young man living abroad and back home on a brief visit.

She makes a virtue of necessity when she 'adopts' a little girl from a very poor family when her servant Salpi is getting old. The girl Kusuma, in reality gets no education; she is trained up as a servant, her chance of getting married is thwarted by the virtuous Loku Nenda in her own interest; Loku Nenda's form of 'religion' is inculcated in her in an even stronger way with all the cruelty, hypocrisy, lack of concern for others, arrogance and distorted attitudes to 'religiousness'. As Loku Nenda ages and gets feeble Kusuma acts on her own, selling even Loku Nenda's ear - studs, the antique furniture in the house, hardly providing a proper meal and all this in the name of "Shardha". When Mahinda pays a final visit on a visit from abroad, Loku Nanda in her wheel chair says "It's my Karma. But I'm lucky to have Kusuma ... its my Karma"

The story is presented simply and clearly and yet from the critical viewpoint of an educated enlightened narrator Mahinda who sees Loku Nenda and her actions for what they really are and the damage such attitudes could cause.

Today in our own country we see hypocrisy, cruelty, lack of concern for others, false shows of virtue, selfishness and wrong attitudes to religion. People like Loku Nenda and Kusuma are seen in plenty extolling their own virtues. Dishonesty, crime and vice are seen everywhere. In this context this well presented short story is a good eye – opener.

(b) What insights do the short stories you have studied offer about aging, death and bereavement?.

Of the short stories in the syllabus Chitra Fernando's 'Action and Reaction' Professional Mourners' by Alagu Subramaniam and A Temporary Matter by Jhumpa Lahiri deal with different aspects of aging, death and bereavement.

In 'Action and Reaction' we see the fate of the once active arrogant Loku Nenda, regarded as the paragon of virtue but a hypocrite in action, finally impoverished, confined to a wheel chair with the woman she finally created in her own image, selfishly preventing her from being educated getting married and living a normal life, domineering over her. Even Loku Nenda's earrings have been taken in the name of misplaced religious devotion. Loku Nanda's fate is a pointer to the fact that one's actions finally bring the reactions one deserves as aging sets in.

'Professional Mourners' exposes the false showy practices that are followed at funerals. The mindless way in which the "Professional Mourners" are cauelly forced to come and make a show of sorrow for an outsider when their own mother has died, shows false practices followed just to boost the ego of others. At the same time in contrast to this we see the genuine sorrow of the nephew who has returned from abroad for the funeral.

In 'A Temporary Matter' we see the repercussions of a bereavement that shatter the lives of a young married couple. Shoba and Shukumar a young Indian couple now living in America lose their first baby for whose arrival they had made such great preparations. The baby is still – born and it was a boy – a fact Shoba learns later. Shukumar was away at the time – away with Shoba's permission – yet even this goes against him when the couple who had been so close to one another deliberately avoid each others company. A temporary black – out seems to draw them closer but the game they play to while away the dark hours telling each other their secrets, only makes the rift greater. Thus here we see the impact of a bereavement on people – the unexpected ways in which they may react.

(c) Using detailed examples from at least three short stories in your syllabus, describe how spoken language is used to enhance the authenticity of key characters.

Spoken language figures in all the short stories and helps to give reality to what is presented and bring out the authenticity of the characters.

When we consider Saki's 'The Open Window' we see Vera the teen – age niece of Mrs. Sappleton speaking to the visitor Nuttel in her clever self – possessed manner

"My aunt will be down presently in the meantime you must try and put up with me."

Her quick mind has already planned a mischievous prank, so she probes....

"Do you know many of the people around here?" And the answer is "Hardly a soul!"

The necessary information gathered (Then you know nothing about my Aunt") The child proceeds with the Aunt's "great tragedy speaking dramatically and with sympathy she describes the "tragic incident"

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The Way to Answer

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English II

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

(b) Nursing

The	Midwifery	Registration	Act	of
1902	gave	the	control	of
mid – wives	work	to	doctors	who
had	to	be	called	in
in	difficult	cases.	But	doctors
didn't	really	take	over	mid – wives
work	as	there	were	too
many	cases	and	they	preferred
attending	on	the	wealthy	leaving
the	poor	to	midwives.	Thus
the	improvement	of	midwives	skills
was	hindered.	Today	most	deliveries
are	done	in	hospital	by
mid wives	but	control	is	in
the	hands	of	doctors.	Nurses
too	are	subordinate	in	the
medical	field.	Prior	to	the
mid-nineteenth	Century	nursing	was	regarded
as	domestic	work	and	not
a	separate	occupation	for	women.
The	necessity	for	training	was
realized	only	later.	Florence	Nightingale
commented	on	the	unsuitability	of
the	type	of	women	who
did	nursing	and	tried	to
develop	nursing	as	a	profession.
She	taught	them	obedience	and
this	made	them	subservient	to

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200 words

3.

- (1) Sekhar is apparently a teacher who is not really interested in teaching but "tempers the truth" due to necessity. He dislikes correcting test papers – "those horrible test papers – and puts off the work till the last moment so that correcting the 'boys' scrawls" must be done in a hurried slipshod manner.
- (2) The writer shows that the Headmaster was not a skilled musician when he refers to a "medley of sounds" that makes the head "throb". Further, the musicians stopped with an "air of relief". It was also a day on which Sekhar was speaking the "truth" and he told the Headmaster point blank that he was no musician.
- (3) The statement shows that sons – in – law were treated with great attention and respect by the father – in – law.
- (4) The Headmaster who fancied himself to be a good musician would have wanted to please Sekhar who was a dreaded music critic and so overlooked his lack of interest as a teacher. However on hearing the "truth" about his music would have displeased him and made him turn against Sekhar. This is seen when he withdraws the time given for correction and says "I must positively have them (the marked papers) tomorrow."
- (5) Speaking the 'truth' makes Sekhar hurt people and more or less turns them against him. His wife is hurt – "he saw her wince" – and the Headmaster too is hurt by his bluntness and apparently turns against him.

4.

- (1) At thirty – nine, a crucial age for a woman as she is nearing forty, the writer through experience and maturity realizes the importance of her father's influence in her growing years. But the father would have been working hard at that time and would not have been able to devote to his daughter all the time she now wishes she could have had.
- (2) She has learnt discipline, financial management, home management and to think correctly.
- (3) The father was hard working and while cooking he danced as a form of exercise or relaxation or contemplated at the same time. The daughter too would have been taught all this. She now appreciates his actions and tries to act in the same way.
- (4) The father would have admired the speaker's honesty, hard work contemplative mind, enjoyment of what she did and ability to manage her life. The words "would have grown" indicate that the speaker would have lost her father rather early in life before she reached maturity and showed how his influence had made her what she was now.
- (5) Thirty Nine is an age when a person has reached full maturity and is able to look back and judge wisely and with correct appreciation. This is what the poem is about; so the title helps the reader to understand what is said.