



ADVANCED GCE

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Comparative and Contextual Study (Closed Text)

2713/RB

READING BOOKLET

To be opened on Tuesday 22 June 2010

**JUNE 2010
Afternoon**



- This document consists of **16** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

- **The first fifteen minutes are for reading the passages in this reading booklet.**
- During this time you may make any annotations you choose on the passages themselves.
- The questions for this examination are given in a separate booklet.
- **You must not open the question paper, or write anything in your answer booklet, until instructed to do so.**
- The Invigilator will tell you when the fifteen minutes begin and end.
- You will then be allowed to open the question paper.
- You will have **two hours** to work on the tasks.

1 Satire

The passage comes from 'Survivor' (1999) by Chuck Palahniuk.

In this passage the narrator, Tender Branson, is a television personality. He is looking for a sensational event to predict on his show, and he visits a psychic, Fertility Hollis.

'So I know you need a miracle to go on television with.'
 What I need is a good prediction.
 'That's why I'm here,' she says and takes a fat daily planner book out of her tote bag.
 'Give me a time window. Give me a date for your prediction.'
 I tell her, Any time during the week after next. 5
 'How about a multiple-car accident,' she says, reading from her book.
 I ask, How many cars?
 'Sixteen cars,' she says. 'Ten dead. Eight injured.'
 Does she have anything flashier?
 'How about a casino fire in Las Vegas,' she says. 'Topless showgirls in big feather 10
 headdresses on fire, stuff like that.'
 Any dead?
 'No. Minor injuries. A lot of smoke damage, though.'
 Something bigger.
 'A tanning salon explosion.' 15
 Something dazzling.
 'Rabies in a national park.'
 Boring.
 'Subway collision.'
 She's putting me to sleep. 20
 'A fur activist strapped with bombs in Paris.'
 Skip it.
 'Oil tanker capsizes.'
 Who cares about that stuff?
 'Movie star miscarries.' 25
 Great, I say. My public will think I'm a real monster when that comes true.
 Fertility pages around in her daily planner.
 'Geez, it's summer,' she says. 'We don't have a lot of choices in disasters.'
 I tell her to keep looking.
 'Next week, Ho Ho the giant panda the National Zoo is trying to breed will pick up a 30
 venereal disease from a visiting panda.'
 No way am I going to say that on television.
 'How about a tuberculosis outbreak?'
 Yawn.
 'Freeway sniper?' 35
 Yawn.
 'Shark attack?'
 She must really be scraping the bottom of the barrel.
 'A broken racehorse leg?'
 'A slashed painting in the Louvre?' 40
 'A ruptured prime minister?'
 'A fallen meteorite?'
 'Infected frozen turkeys?'
 'A forest fire?'
 No, I tell her. 45
 Too sad.
 Too artsy.
 Too political.
 Too esoteric.

Too gross. 50
 No appeal.
 'A lava flow?' Fertility asks.
 Too slow. No real drama. Mostly just property damage.
 The problem is disaster movies have everybody expecting too much from nature.
 The waitress brings the chicken stir-fry and my lemon meringue pie and fills our 55
 coffee cups. Then she smiles and goes off to die.*
 Fertility pages back and forth in her book.
 In my guts, the cherry pie is putting up a fight. Spokane¹ is outside. The air conditioning
 is inside. Nothing even looks like a pattern.
 Fertility Hollis says, 'How about killer bees?' 60
 I ask, Where?
 'Arriving in Dallas, Texas.'
 When?
 'Next Sunday morning, at ten past eight.'
 A few? A swarm? How many? 65
 'Zillions.'
 I tell her, Perfect.
 Fertility lets out a sigh and digs into her chicken stir-fry. 'Shit,' she says, 'That's the
 one I knew you'd pick all along.'

* The waitress's death has been foretold earlier in the novel.

¹ *Spokane*: the town in which this scene takes place

2 The Gothic Tradition

The passage is taken from the short story 'The Willows' (1907) by Algernon Blackwood.

When I reached the point of sand jutting out among the waves, the spell of the place descended upon me with a positive shock. No mere 'scenery' could have produced such an effect. There was something more here, something to alarm.

I gazed across the waste of wild waters; I watched the whispering willows; I heard the ceaseless beating of the tireless wind; and, one and all, each in its own way, stirred in me this sensation of a strange distress. But the *willows* especially: for ever they went on chattering and talking among themselves, laughing a little, shrilly crying out, sometimes sighing – but what it was they made so much to-do about belonged to the secret life of the great plain they inhabited. And it was utterly alien to the world I knew, or to that of the wild yet kindly elements. They made me think of a host of beings from another plane of life, another evolution altogether, perhaps, all discussing a mystery known only to themselves. I watched them moving busily together, oddly shaking their big bushy heads, twirling their myriad leaves even when there was no wind. They moved of their own will as though alive, and they touched, by some incalculable method, my own keen sense of the *horrible*. 5 10

There they stood in the moonlight, like a vast army surrounding our camp, shaking their innumerable silver spears defiantly, formed all ready for an attack. 15

The psychology of places, for some imaginations at least, is very vivid; for the wanderer, especially, camps have their 'note' either of welcome or rejection. At first it may not always be apparent, because the busy preparations of tent and cooking prevent, but with the first pause – after supper usually – it comes and announces itself. And the note of this willow-camp now became unmistakably plain to me: we were interlopers, trespassers; we were not welcomed. The sense of unfamiliarity grew upon me as I stood there watching. We touched the frontier of a region where our presence was resented. For a night's lodging we might perhaps be tolerated; but for a prolonged and inquisitive stay – No! by all the gods of the trees and the wilderness, no! We were the first human influences upon this island, and we were not wanted. *The willows were against us*. 20 25

Strange thoughts like these, bizarre fancies, borne I know not whence, found lodgment in my mind as I stood listening. What, I thought, if, after all, these crouching willows proved to be alive; if suddenly they should rise up, like a swarm of living creatures, marshalled by the gods whose territory we had invaded, sweep towards us off the vast swamps, booming overhead in the night – and then *settle down*! As I looked it was so easy to imagine they actually moved, crept nearer, retreated a little, huddled together in masses, hostile, waiting for the great wind that should finally start them a-running. I could have sworn their aspect changed a little, and their ranks deepened and pressed more closely together. 30 35

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3 Writing of the Romantic Era

Taken from 'To a Skylark' (1806) by Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Hail to thee, blithe ¹ Spirit! Bird thou never wert, That from Heaven, or near it, Pourest thy full heart In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.	5
Higher still and higher From the earth thou springest Like a cloud of fire; The blue deep thou wingest, And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.	10
In the golden lightning Of the sunken sun O'er which clouds are brightening, Thou dost float and run, Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.	15
The pale purple even ² Melts around thy flight; Like a star of heaven In the broad daylight Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight:	20
Keen as are the arrows Of that silver sphere, Whose intense lamp narrows In the white dawn clear Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.	25
All the earth and air With thy voice is loud, As, when night is bare, From one lonely cloud The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflow'd.	30
What thou art we know not; What is most like thee? From rainbow clouds there flow not Drops so bright to see As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.	35
Like a poet hidden In the light of thought, Singing hymns unbidden, Till the world is wrought To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:	40

Like a high-born maiden
 In a palace tower,
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour
 With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower: 45

Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering unbeholden
 Its aërial hue
 Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view: 50

Like a rose embower'd
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflower'd,
 Till the scent it gives
 Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingèd thieves. 55

¹ *blithe*: joyful, carefree

² *even*: evening

4 20th Century American Prose

The passage is taken from a novel 'Travels with Charley' (1961) by John Steinbeck.

'Travels with Charley' is an autobiographical account of a journey around America that Steinbeck made with his dog, Charley, in which he sought to explore places off the beaten track.

'Joe's quite a dreamer,' the wife said. 'He's always figuring something out. Tell him your ideas, Joe.'

'Maybe he wouldn't be interested.'

'Sure I would.'

'Well, it's not a dream like she said, it's for real, and I'm going to do it pretty soon now. 5
Take a little capital, but it would pay off. I been looking around the used lots for the unit I want at the price I want to pay. Going to rip out the guts and set it up for a repair shop. I got enough tools nearly already, and I'll stock little things like windshield wipers and fan belts and cylinder rings and inner tubes, stuff like that. You take these courts¹ are getting bigger and bigger. Some of the mobile people got two cars. I'll rent me a hundred feet of 10
ground right near and I'll be in business. There's one thing you can say about cars, there's nearly always something wrong with them that's got to be fixed. And I'll have my house, this here one right beside my shop. That way I would have a bell and give twenty-four-hour service.'

'Sounds like a good deal,' I said. And it does. 15

'Best thing about it,' Joe went on, 'if business fell off, why, I'd just move on where it was good.'

His wife said, 'Joe's got it all worked out on paper where everything's going to go, every wrench and drill, even an electric welder. Joe's a wonderful welder.'

I said, 'I take back what I said, Joe. I guess you've got your roots in a grease pit.' 20

'You could do worse. I even worked that out. And you know, when the kids grow up, we could even work our way south in the winter and north in the summer.'

'Joe does good work,' said his wife. 'He's got his own steady customers where he works. Some men come fifty miles to get Joe to work on their cars because he does good work.' 25

'I'm a real good mechanic,' said Joe.

Driving the big highway near Toledo I had a conversation with Charley on the subject of roots. He listened but he didn't reply. In the pattern-thinking about roots I and most other people have left two things out of consideration. Could it be that Americans are a restless people, a mobile people, never satisfied with where they are as a matter of selection? The pioneers, the immigrants who peopled the continent, were the restless ones in Europe. The steady rooted ones stayed home and are still there. But every one of us, except the Negroes forced here as slaves, are descended from the restless ones, the wayward ones who were not content to stay at home. Wouldn't it be unusual if we had not inherited this tendency? And the fact is that we have. But that's the short view. 30
What are roots and how long have we had them? If our species has existed for a couple of million years, what is its history? Our remote ancestors followed the game, moved with the food supply, and fled from evil weather, from ice and the changing seasons. Then after millennia beyond thinking they domesticated some animals so that they lived with their food supply. Then of necessity they followed the grass that fed their flocks in endless wanderings. Only when agriculture came into practice – and that's not very long ago in terms of the whole history – did a place achieve meaning and value and permanence. 35
But land is a tangible, and tangibles have a way of getting into few hands. Thus it was that one man wanted ownership of land and at the same time wanted servitude because someone had to work it. Roots were in ownership of land, in tangible and immovable possessions. In this view we are a restless species with a very short history of roots, and those not widely distributed. Perhaps we have overrated roots as a psychic need. Maybe the greater the urge, the deeper and more ancient is the need, the will, the hunger to be somewhere else. 45

¹ *courts*: (short for *motorcourts*) motels; hotels designed primarily for people travelling by car

5 Drama Post-1945

The passage comes from 'Billy Liar' (1960) by Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall.

Billy is a fantasist and compulsive liar who wants to leave home. In this scene Billy has brought his latest girlfriend, Barbara, home to tea.

- GEOFFREY: Course, I don't believe in interfering. You've made your mind up. I don't want you to come to me and say that I stopped you doing it.
- BILLY: Well, Dad, it's not that simple. I've not really decided what we'll be doing yet.
- GEOFFREY: You couldn't do no worse than us when we started. Me and your mother. 5
We'd nothing – I hadn't two ha'pennies to scratch my backside with. We had to manage.
- BILLY: I'm not bothered about managing, Dad. It's just that I haven't made my mind up.
- GEOFFREY: *(Almost reverting back to his normal antagonism)* Well, you want to get 10
your bloody mind made up, lad. Right sharp. Before she does it for you.
- BILLY: You see ...
- FLORENCE: *(Interrupting)* I told her. I had my say. I told her, you don't get married till you're twenty-one.
- BILLY: Just a minute, Grandma ... 15
- FLORENCE: *(Ignoring him)* You can do as you like then, I said. Only, I said, don't come running back to me when you can't manage. I said you'll have it to put up with ...
- BILLY: *(Completely exasperated)* For Christ's sake belt up!
- GEOFFREY: *(Losing his temper completely)* You what! *(He moves across and grabs 20*
Billy by his shirt) You what did you say? What was that? What did you say?
- BILLY: *(Frightened but unrepentant)* I merely remarked ...
- GEOFFREY: *(Shouting)* Talk bloody properly when you talk to me! You were talking different a minute ago, weren't you? What did you just say to your grandma? What did you just say? 25
Alice enters from the kitchen.
- ALICE: Hey, what's all this row? *(She indicates the kitchen)* Don't you know we've got somebody here?
- GEOFFREY: I can't help who's here! She might as well know what he is! Because I'll tell her! *(Shaking him)* He's ignorant! That's what you are, isn't it? Ignorant! 30
Ignorant! Isn't it?
- ALICE: Well, don't pull him round. That shirt's clean on.
- GEOFFREY: *(Releasing his hold on Billy)* I'll clean shirt him before I've finished!
- ALICE: Well, what's he done?
- GEOFFREY: I'll clean shirt him round his bloody ear-hole. With his bloody fountain pens 35
and his bloody suede shoes! Well, he doesn't go out tonight. I know where he gets it from. He stops in tonight and tomorrow night as well.
- BILLY: Look ...
- GEOFFREY: Don't 'look' me! With your look this and look that! And you can get all that bloody books and rubbish or whatever it is cleared out of that sideboard 40
cupboard as well! Before I chuck 'em out – and you with 'em!
- BILLY: What's up? They're not hurting you are they?
Barbara enters and stands in the kitchen doorway uncertainly.
- GEOFFREY: No, and they're not bloody hurting you either!
- ALICE: *(Quietly)* Well, I don't know what you've done now. 45
- GEOFFREY: Answering back at his grandmother. If that's what they learned him at grammar school I'm glad I'm bloody uneducated! Anyroad, I've finished with him! He knows where there's a suitcase. If he wants to go to London he can bloody well go.

ALICE: (Sharply) Oh, but he's not. 50
 GEOFFREY: I've finished with him. He can go.
 ALICE: Oh, but he's not.
 GEOFFREY: He's going! He can get his bloody things together! He's going out!
 ALICE: Oh, but he's not. Oh, but he's not. Oh, but he is not!
 BILLY: (Trying to get a word in) Look, can I settle this ... 55
 GEOFFREY: (Interrupting) It's ever since he started work. Complaining about this and that and the other. If it isn't his boiled eggs it's something else. You have to get special bloody wheatflakes for him because there's a bloody plastic bloody submarine in the packet. Splashing about in the kitchen at his age. He wants putting away. Well, I've had enough – he can go. 60
 ALICE: Oh, but he's not. Now, you just listen to me, Geoffrey. He's not old enough to go to London or anywhere else.
 GEOFFREY: He's old enough to get himself engaged. He thinks he is. He's old enough and bloody daft enough.
 ALICE: Well, you said yourself. He doesn't think. He gets ideas in his head. 65
 GEOFFREY: He can go. I've finished with him.
 ALICE: Oh, but he is not. Not while I'm here.
 BARBARA: (Who has been staring at Florence) Mrs Fisher ...
 GEOFFREY: (Ignoring her) He wants to get into the bloody army, that's what he wants to do. 70
 ALICE: (Spiritedly) Yes, and you want to get into the bloody army as well.
 BARBARA: Mrs Fisher. I don't think Billy's grandma's very well.
 Alice, Geoffrey and Billy turn and look at Florence, who is sitting slumped in her chair.
 ALICE: (Rushing across to her mother) Now look what you've done! 75
 GEOFFREY: (To Billy) I hope you're bloody satisfied now. She's had another do.
 ALICE: It's no use blaming him, Geoffrey. You're both as bad as each other.

6 Post-Colonial Literature

The passage comes from 'The Lonely Londoners' (1956) by Samuel Selvon.

Galahad has recently come to London from the West Indies.

Galahad make for the tube station when he left Moses, and he stand up there on Queensway watching everybody going about their business, and a feeling of loneliness and fright come on him all of a sudden. He forget all the brave words he was talking to Moses, and he realise that here he is, in London, and he ain't have money or work or place to sleep or any friend or anything, and he standing up here by the tube station watching people, and everybody look so busy he frighten to ask questions from any of them. You think any of them bothering with what going on in his mind? Or in anybody else mind but their own? He see a test come and take a newspaper and put down the money on a box – nobody there to watch the fellar and yet he put the money down. What sort of thing is that? Galahad wonder, they are not afraid somebody thief the money? 5 10

He bounce up against a woman coming out the station but she pass him like a full trolley before he could say sorry. Everybody doing something or going somewhere, is only he who walking stupid.

On top of that, is one of those winter mornings when a kind of fog hovering around. The sun shining, but Galahad never see the sun look like how it looking now. No heat from it, it just there in the sky like a force-ripe orange. When he look up, the colour of the sky so desolate it make him more frighten. It have a kind of melancholy aspect about the morning that making him shiver. He have a feeling is about seven o'clock in the evening: when he look at a clock on top a building he see is only half-past ten in the morning. 15

By and by he drift down to Whiteleys.¹ Suddenly he stand up and look back. He wonder if he could find his way back to Moses room! Jesus Christ, suppose he get lost? He ain't even remember the name of the street where Moses living. In the panic he start to pat pocket to make sure he have money on him, and he begin to search for passport and some other papers he had. A feeling come over him as if he lost everything he have – clothes, shoes, hat – and he start to touch himself here and there as if he in a daze. 20 25

Suddenly Galahad feel a hand on his shoulder and though he want to look and see who it is, is as if the hand paralyse him and he can't move. He just stand up there and he hear a voice say: 'Move along now, don't block the pavement.'

When he was able to look Galahad see a policeman near him. Again he panic, though he ain't do anything against the law. Still is so people does feel in Trinidad when police near them, as if, even though they ain't commit a crime, the policeman would find something wrong that they do and want to lock them up. 30

Galahad start to stammer, all the big talk left him now.

'Can I help you to get some place?' the policeman say.

'I looking for the employment exchange,' Galahad say, looking around as if he expect it to be near. 35

'You have to catch a bus over there,' the policeman say, pointing across the road. 'The conductor will tell you where to get off.'

'Thanks,' Galahad say. He went across the road quick and stand up by Queen's to catch himself. 40

'You getting on like a damn fool,' he tell himself. 'What happen to you? All of a sudden like you gone stupid. Take it easy,' he say, unconsciously repeating Moses advice. 'You new in this place, it will take you some time to settle in.'

But the pep talk ain't do much to help, and he nearly dead with joy when he look up the road and see Moses coming. He start to whistle monkeyeric like how fellars in the West Indies whistle when they see a friend and want to attract attention. But he didn't have to do that, for Moses was coming straight to him. 45

'Moses,' he say, 'I too glad to see you, boy. If you don't mind I want you to come with me.'

'I thought so,' Moses say. 'Boy, you lucky I have soft heart, else you never see me 50

again as long as you stay in London. You don't know that does happen? Fellars don't see one another for years here. Anyway, one thing is you must done with all this big talk.'

'Yes, yes,' Galahad say, so relieved to see Moses that he putting his hands on his shoulders like they is old pals.

'Come and catch a bus,' Moses say, and he take Galahad to the bus queue. When the bus come, Galahad pushing in front of the other people though Moses try to hold him back, and the conductor say, 'Ere, you can't break the queue like that, mate.' And Galahad had to stand up and watch all the people who was there before him get on the bus, and a old lady look at him with a loud tone in her eye, and a girl tell a fellar she was with: 'They'll have to learn to do better, you know.'

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¹ *Whiteleys*: a London department store

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