

Wednesday 1 June 2022: 12pm

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Thursday 2 June 2022: 12pm

Part II Paper 11

PROSE FORMS 1936-56

Answer **Section A** and **two** questions in **Section B**.

At least one of your answers in **Section B** must include substantial discussion of **two or more** authors.

In questions where a quotation is attributed, candidates are not obliged to refer to that author in their answer unless specifically required to do so.

Do **not** present the same material twice, **either** in this paper **or** in the examination as a whole.

Irrelevant answers, or answers only tenuously related to the question, will be penalized.

In the case of handwritten scripts, illegible handwriting may place candidates at a disadvantage.

Include your **number**, not your name, on submitted scripts.

There will be a word-count range of 800-1200 per essay, which is intended to approximate to the amount that can be written by hand under normal examination conditions. For papers which include a 'Section A' made up of multiple parts, the word-count for a candidate's responses to Section A as a whole must be within the range of 800–1200 words.

Examination responses should conform to the following presentation requirements: they should be in minimum 12pt type; should use a sans serif typeface (eg Arial or Calibri); should be 1.5 or double-spaced; and should be submitted as a word-processed document (in .docx or .rtf format).

SECTION A

1. Comment on **any two** of the following passages, discussing points of literary and historical interest raised by them, specifically in relation to their prose forms and styles. You are required to discuss the passages **comparatively**.
Passage (a) is from a memoir; (b) is from a work of architectural history; (c) is reportage; (d) is from an essay; (e) is from a natural history; and (f) is from a travelogue.

(a)

The simple truth is that after I had left Kishorganj the relation between me and the environment in which I lived underwent a revolution. Kishorganj, Banagram, and Kalikutch are interwoven with my being; so is the England of my imagination; they formed and shaped me; but when once torn up from my natural habitat I became liberated from the habitat altogether; my environment and I began to fall apart; and in the end the environment became wholly external, a thing to feel, observe, and measure, and a thing to act and react on, but never to absorb or be absorbed in. It is said that to be once bitten is to be twice shy, I suppose to be once *deraciné** is to be for ever on the road. 5

Thus it happens that today my zoological status has altered. From being the most firmly rooted and stationary thing a man can be, the nearest human approach to vegetation — the offspring of a rural land-owning line — I have become what is perhaps the most unsettled product of modern urban life, a journalist, who is as ready as his paper to circulate everywhere for a penny and bear gladly on his back any advertisements he is paid for. Even if I had not taken to journalism I could not have helped becoming a nomad of the industrial age, wandering from pasture to pasture, not of grass, but of employment. 10 15

This change of status has necessarily brought in its wake a complete transformation in my feelings for the environment. A true rustic can never separate himself from his surroundings, and is hardly even conscious of them. I am ever aware of mine as an intolerable pressure. Sometimes the burden is static, like the burden of the old Titan, Atlas; at other times I have for it the same kind of feeling as, endowing the aeroplane with consciousness, I imagine it to have for what is popularly believed to be its home element, but through which it really has to drag its heavier-than-air body with infinite strain. I know what it means to be never able to forget that strain — to be perpetually remembering that as soon as that colossal horse-power and those thousands of revolutions per minute have ceased to shake and tear one's being, one would plunge headlong and crash. Since the environment is felt by me as a dynamic burden, I should not be surprised to hear from the aeroplane a confession that in spite of being the proudest of modern beauties it feels thoroughly unhappy comparing itself with its out-of-date rival on the sea— the last of the windjammers which used to bring grain from Australia to Europe. There is a world of difference between being buoyed up by one's environment, so as to be able to glide naturally on it, and having to beat it until it unwillingly generates the force to keep one afloat. 20 25 30

NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951)

*Note: *deraciné* is a French word meaning 'uprooted'.

(b)

New ruins have not yet acquired the weathered patina of age, the true rust of the barons' wars, not yet put on their ivy, nor equipped themselves with the appropriate bestiary of lizards, bats, screech-owls, serpents, speckled toads and little foxes which, as has been so frequently observed by ruin-explorers, hold high revel in the precincts of old ruins (such revelling, though noted with pleasure, is seldom described in detail; possibly the jackal waltzes with the toad, the lizard with the fox, while the screech-owl supplies the music and they all glory and drink deep among the tumbled capitals). But new ruins are for a time stark and bare, vegetationless and creatureless; blackened and torn, they smell of fire and mortality. 5

It will not be for long. Very soon trees will be thrusting through the empty window sockets, the rose-bay and fennel blossoming within the broken walls, the brambles tangling outside them. Very soon the ruin will be enjungled, engulfed, and the appropriate creatures will revel. Even ruins in city streets will, if they are let alone, come, soon or late, to the same fate. Month by month it grows harder to trace the streets around them; here, we see, is the lane of tangled briars that was a street of warehouses; there, in those jungled caverns, stood the large tailor's shop; where those grassy paths cross, a board swings, bearing the name of a tavern. We stumble among the stone foundations and fragments of cellar walls, among the ghosts of the exiled merchants and the publicans who there carried on their gainful trades. Shells of churches gape emptily; over broken altars the small yellow dandelions make their pattern. All this will presently be; but at first there is only the ruin; a mass of torn, charred prayer books strew the stone floor; the statues, tumbled from their niches, have broken in pieces; rafters and rubble pile knee-deep. But often the ruin has put on, in its catastrophic tipsy chaos, a bizarre new charm. What was last week a drab little house has become a steep flight of stairs winding up in the open between gaily-coloured walls, tiled lavatories, interiors bright and intimate like a Dutch picture or a stage set; the stairway climbs up and up, undaunted, to the roofless summit where it meets the sky. The house has put on melodrama; people stop to stare; here is a domestic scene wide open for all to enjoy. Tomorrow or tonight, the gazers feel, their own dwelling may be even as this. Last night the house was scenic; flames leaping to the sky; today it is squalid and *morne**, but out of its dereliction it flaunts the flags of what is left. 10 15 20 25 30

ROSE MACAULAY, *The Pleasure of Ruins* (1953)

*Note: *morne* is a French word meaning dreary or bleak.

(c)

[A] new suit of overalls has among its beauties those of a blueprint: and they are a map of a working man.

The shirts too; squarely cut, and strongly seamed; with big square pockets and with metal buttons: the cloth stiff, the sweat cold when it is new, the collar large in newness and standing out in angles under the ears; so that in these new workclothes a man has the shy and silly formal charm of a mail-order-catalogue engraving.

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The changes that age, use, weather, work upon these.

They have begun with the massive yet delicate beauty of most things which are turned out most cheaply in great tribes by machines: and on this basis of structure they are changed into images and marvels of nature.

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The structures sag, and take on the look, some of use; some, the pencil pockets, the pretty atrophies of what is never used; the edges of the thigh pockets become stretched and lie open, fluted, like the gills of a fish. The bright seams lose their whiteness and are lines and ridges. The whole fabric is shrunken to size, which was bought large. The whole shape, texture, colour, finally substance, all are changed. The shape, particularly along the urgent frontage of the thighs, so that the whole structure of the knee and musculature of the thigh is sculptured there; each man's garment wearing the shape and beauty of his induplicable body. The texture and the color change in union, by sweat, sun, laundering, between the steady pressures of its use and age: both, at length, into realms of fine softness and marvel of draping and velvet plays of light which chamois and silk can only suggest, not touch; and into a region and scale of blues, subtle, delicious, and deft beyond what I have ever seen elsewhere approached except in rare skies, the smoky light some days are filmed with, and some of the blues of Cézanne: one could watch and touch even one such garment, study it, with the eyes, the fingers, and the subtlest lips, almost illimitably long, and never fully learn it; and I saw no two which did not hold some world of exquisiteness of its own. Finally, too; particularly athwart the crest and swing of the shoulders, of the shirts: this fabric breaks like snow, and is stitched and patched: these break, and again are stitched and patched and ruptured, and stitches and patches are manifolded upon the stitches and patches, and more on these, so that at length, at the shoulders, the shirt contains virtually nothing of the original fabric and a man, George Gudger, I remember so well, and many hundreds of others like him, wears in his work on the power of his shoulders a fabric as intricate and fragile, and as deeply in honor of the reigning sun, as the feather mantle of a Toltec prince.

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JAMES AGEE, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: Three Tenant Families* (1941)

(d)

[I]t is perfectly possible to be enamoured of Paris while remaining totally indifferent, or even hostile to the French. And this is made possible by the one person in Paris whom the legend seems least to affect, who is not living it at all, that is, the Parisian himself. He, with his impenetrable *politesse*, and with techniques unspeakably more direct, keeps the traveller at an unmistakable arm's length. Unlucky indeed, as well as rare, the traveller who thirsts to know the lives of the people – the people don't want him in their lives. Neither does the Parisian exhibit the faintest personal interest, or curiosity, concerning the life, or habits, of any stranger. So long as he keeps within the law, which, after all, most people have sufficient ingenuity to do, he may stand on his head, for all the Parisian cares. It is this arrogant indifference on the part of the Parisian, with its unpredictable effects on the traveller, which makes so splendid the Paris air, to say nothing whatever of the exhilarating effect it has on the Paris scene.

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The American student lives here, then, in a kind of social limbo. He is allowed, and he gratefully embraces irresponsibility; and, at the same time, since he is American, he is invested with power, whether or not he likes it, however he may choose to confirm or deny it. Though the students of any nation, in Paris, are allowed irresponsibility, few seem to need it as desperately as Americans seem to need it; and none, naturally, move in the same aura of power, which sets up in the general breast a perceptible anxiety, and wonder, and a perceptible resentment. This is the "catch", for the American, in the Paris freedom: that he becomes here a kind of revenant to Europe, the future of which continent, it may be, is in his hands. The problems proceeding from the distinction he thus finds thrust upon him might not, for a sensibility less definitively lonely, frame so painful a dilemma: but the American wishes to be liked *as a person*, an implied distinction which makes perfect sense to him, and none whatever to the European. What the American means is that he does not want to be confused with the Marshall Plan, Hollywood, the Yankee dollar, television, or Senator McCarthy. What the European, in a thoroughly exasperating innocence, assumes is that the American cannot, of course, be divorced from the so diverse phenomena which make up his country, and that he is willing, and able, to clarify the American conundrum. If the American cannot do this, his despairing aspect seems to say, who, under heaven, can? This moment, which instinctive ingenuity delays as long as possible, nevertheless arrives, and punctuates the Paris honeymoon. It is the moment, so to speak, when one leaves the Paris of legend and finds oneself in the real and difficult Paris of the present. At this moment Paris ceases to be a city dedicated to *la vie bohème**, and becomes one of the cities of Europe. At this point, too, it may be suggested, the legend of Paris had done its deadly work, which is, perhaps, so to stun the traveller with freedom that he begins to long for the prison of home – home then becoming the place where questions are not asked.

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JAMES BALDWIN, 'A Question of Identity' (1954)

Note: *la vie bohème* is a French phrase meaning 'the bohemian life'.

(e)

For the most part our blues are cool —slate-blue, steel-blue, ink-blue, ice-blue, milk-blue. The hot mauves and heliotropes of rainy land in the west are absent. Here, rain in the offing, the land grows navy-blue. Corries* take on the depth of gentian, shadowed with hyacinth and violet. But the most characteristic blue of Deeside space and distance is one that I find it hard to name. It is azure thinned out till all its vivid intensity is gone, but not the purity of its colour: beaten to a transparency of itself, but still itself. At every time of year there are days when the distant hills have this clear thin blueness. On other days they are soft lavender; opal; or edged with a hard line of china-blue that means rain to come.

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It is predominantly a blue landscape, partly because everywhere one can have long views (yet nearby things can be blue too—massed firs, July corn) and the blues have a quality which I have never seen, even in mountain country of extreme beauty, outside Scotland. The colour itself seems to have body; to be substance. It lies like the bloom on a plum, or the pile of plush. Sometimes in a hill hollow it would seem to have its own existence, apart from both earth and sky. The result is to give the landscape depth and at least the illusion of significance. The ‘significance’ may be reducible to latitude, the lines on which the country is built, and the amount of moisture in the atmosphere: but then we have it on good authority that three notes combined together make a star.

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The blue of the sky may be sky-blue; or duck-blue, turquoise or milk or ink (see list above). Water may be like speedwell; or steel or ink (see list above). Atmospherics apart, earth, sky and water being disposed of, the blues are small and private. Of flowers, lupins make the boldest splash, the harebells are tiny but a multitude, they mist the waysides with transparency of blue. So are the violets: sometimes in a June field they lie like pools of water. In the higher country, the dark, serene blue of milkwort; speedwell everywhere — on Ben MacDhui and on Lochnagar a patch of the lovely Alpine Veronica; bland blaeberrries; and on cottage walls the opaque beady blue of tropaeolum fruits. Birds’ eggs, the sheen on the plumage, patches of feathers — jay, kingfisher, bullfinch, chaffinch, tit — dragonflies, the vivid and definite blue of the small blue butterflies. The frailest blues are woodsmoke and the shadows cast on snow. The most blazing blue is vetch: it runs over field-ends and roadsides like a flame of incandescent mauve. No other colour, not even the orange-reds of autumn, has such intensity.

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NAN SHEPHERD, ‘Colours of Deeside’, *The Deeside Field*, 1938

*Note: *Corrie* is the Scottish word for a semicircular hollow found on the side of a mountain, formed by glacial erosion.

(f)

An unusually large orchestra had been crowded into the band pit. The conductor, wearing earphones, was bobbing up and down, all anxiety. On the stage itself and in the aisles close to the orchestra were men with microphones, men with spotlights, men behind television cameras, men carrying flex of all kinds, men with stop-watches, men who just shouted at other men, busy platoons of technicians. Outside the proscenium arches were several television sets, and high on one side a large screen on which the programme could be projected. All this complication was necessary, for the performances on the stage were to be transmitted, and in addition the Channel 13 studio was to be used, chiefly for filmed material; so that when nothing was happening on the stage we could look at the screens at each side and view the items from the studio. Again, if we preferred it, we could discover on the screen the very performers, brought to Houston at gigantic expense, who were there on the stage. We were simultaneously at both ends of the communicating process, where it went in, where it came out. Sitting at ease, there we were, in the new wonderland, some of us only two rows behind the stockholders, the men whose money was about to work this miracle. Why, I had only to push aside two of their wives, make a very long arm, and I could have plucked one of their white carnations.

Time rolled away its minutes, flashed by its seconds. The moment, sharpened to a heartbeat, was rushing to meet us. The host of technicians passed from a frenzy of activity into a frozen agony of anticipation. Earphones were adjusted, watches stared at, hands raised to give the signal at the exact fraction of a second: all as if a hydrogen bomb were about to be exploded. In more than one stomach there the acids of anxiety and apprehension were eating into the lining, the ulcers were well on their way. And for what? I reminded myself how in my time I had been behind the scenes in many a theatre, opera house, concert hall, where supremely difficult, famous, noble works were to be offered audiences of notable distinction, and how the people working there might have been more than alert and eager, sometimes perhaps on edge, but had shown nothing of this agonized preoccupation with the smallest divisions of time, this racking anxiety not to delay the programme for half a moment. But such is the idiotic spell of mere size, the evil sorcery of multiplication, men will now torture themselves among the split seconds so that masses of the idle-minded shall not be kept waiting, not for five blinks of an eye, for their trivial entertainment.

J. B. PRIESTLEY, 'Inauguration of Channel Thirteen' (1955)

SECTION B

Answer **two** questions.

At least one of your answers must include substantial discussion of **two or more** authors.

2. 'The poem opens with a bay wild with birds and somewhat secluded from man. And it is in front, or within sight of this bay that the action takes place: merging from a natural state into a supernatural tension within the first six stanzas. War changes its contour.'

LYNETTE ROBERTS, 'Argument' that introduces her long poem 'Gods with Stainless Ears' (1951)

How do introductions, forewords or prefaces shape how we read works of the period?

3. 'We are passing through the birth pains of bringing forth a new Jamaica. In this new era literature must take its place.' (UNA MARSON, 1937).

What does prose writing of the period suggest was the place of literature in the struggle against colonialism?

4. 'The present age was not one in which it was possible to write a novel.'

(IRIS MURDOCH, *Under the Net*, 1954)

Consider this assertion with reference to **any** short fiction of the period.

5. 'Feminine prose, as Charles Dickens and James Joyce have delightfully shown themselves to be aware, should properly be unpunctuated, moving from point to point without formal obstructions.' (DOROTHY RICHARDSON, 1938)

What connections does the prose of this period assert **and/or** suggest between gender and literary form?

6. 'Good discourse seeks above all to be transparent, not as a symbol of feeling, but as a vehicle of sense; the artistic form is strictly bound to the literal function. That is why such writing is not poetry.' (SUSANNE LANGER, 1973)

Is Langer's distinction between poetry and prose supported by the prose writing of this period?

7. 'You used to laugh at the books Miss Savage read – about spies, and murders, and violence, and wild motor-car chases, but dear, that's real life.' (GRAHAM GREENE, *The Ministry of Fear*, 1943)

How seriously should we read the genre fiction of this period?

8. 'Until we have more facts, more biographies, more autobiographies, we cannot know much about ordinary people, let alone about extraordinary people.'
(VIRGINIA WOOLF, 'The Leaning Tower', 1940)
How does prose writing in this period negotiate the difference between the ordinary and the extraordinary?
9. "'Frog Perspectives". This is the phrase that I've borrowed from Nietzsche to describe someone looking from below upward, a sense of someone who feels himself lower than others.' (RICHARD WRIGHT, 1957).
By what means, and how effectively, were such perspectives conveyed in the prose of this period?
10. 'Sprats Fish in tarp on floor in red dark. In nets irreg., being picked & shaken out., flying in front of men. Net ochre, all shaken folds being piled onto net carrier, corks' (PRUNELLA CLOUGH, notes for the composition of her painting *Fisherman with Sprats*, 1948)
What is valuable in the different forms of writing by artists in the period?
11. 'Melodramatic maybe, it seems to me now. But then it was like throwing a million bricks out of my heart when I threw the books into the water. I leaned over the rail of the SS *Malone* and threw the books as far as I could out into the sea – all the books I had had at Columbia, and all the books I had lately bought to read.'
(LANGSTON HUGHES, *The Big Sea*, 1941)
Does Hughes's gesture of disposal typify attitudes to literary inheritance in the writing of this period?
12. 'The sun broke feebly through the clouds. All over the valley hung a thick pall of dirty smoke. A forest of blackened chimney stacks, belching untidily like recently fired rifles, pointed skywards.' (ROBERT WESTERBY, *Wide Boys Never Work*, 1937)
To what extent and with what effects did fiction of the period militarize the imagination?
13. 'Everybody's done something to be sorry for.' (RAYMOND CHANDLER, *The Lady in the Lake*, 1947)
Discuss the treatment of guilt in the fiction or non-fiction of this period.
14. '[Henry] Green's novels arise from a layer of consciousness deeper than that from which fiction usually emanates; one is aware at one and the same time of several strata of meaning'. WALTER ALLEN, 'Henry Green' (1945)
Make a case for any writer(s) of the period who utilize(s) multiple strata of meaning.

15. She took up one of the tracts, fingered the cheap paper, sniffed the heavy odour of the printer's ink, began to read.
A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism.
(SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER, 1936, citing KARL MARX and FRIEDRICH ENGELS, 1848)

How did prose writers of this period depict the act of reading?
16. 'Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations. It is not accidental that our greatest art is intimate and not monumental' (MAX WEBER, 1918).
In the light of this remark, write about the relationship between the intimate and the monumental in the prose writing of this period.
17. 'So many footprints in the dust that you lose track of your own; you lose track of yourself, and you do not care. The peace of absolute dislocation from everything you have been and done settles down. The old plan for living has been erased.'
(ELIZABETH BOWEN, 'Calico Windows', 1944)
To what extent did traces of individuality persist in wartime, according to the prose writing of this period?
18. 'It was long after midnight when the train came in. Word had come through earlier that the first casualties from France were expected that evening, and we were told to stand by. Time lay heavily, dry and still over the hot afternoon.'
KEITH VAUGHAN, 'The Way We Live Now' (1942)
Write about anticipation in works of the period.
19. 'The essay has to create from within itself all the preconditions for the effectiveness and validity of its vision. Therefore two essays can never contradict one another: each creates a different world.' (GEORG LUKÁCS, 'On the Nature and Form of the Essay', 1910)
Do the essays of this period reflect the world, or create their own?
20. "'I need..." he lifted his head, shut his eyes as if to concentrate, "things crashing into me, violence; the quiet will kill me."' (ELIZABETH TAYLOR, *A Wreath of Roses*, 1947)
How did any prose writing of the period deal with violence and its aftermath?

21. 'Don't blab too much'—listen more; sympathize & “understand” people — Keep troubles to self’ (SYLVIA PLATH, 1 April 1956 [journal fragment]).
In the light of Plath’s remark, write about the ways in which prose writing of this period employed techniques of revelation **and/or** concealment.

END OF PAPER