

Alexandria University
Department of English
3rd June, 2010
Second Term 2009/2010



Faculty of Arts, Damanhour
Fourth Year
Time Allowed: 2hrs.
American Literature

Answer TWO questions only: (50 Marks for each)

Discuss this dialogue from Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman*:
[He breaks off, suddenly angry.] Dad, you're not letting me tell you
what I want to tell you!

[Accusing, angered]: You insulted him, didn't you?

Listen, will you let me out of it, will you just let me out of it!

*A single trumpet note jars the ear. The light of green leaves stains the
house, which holds the air of night and a dream. Young Bernard enters
and knocks on the door of the house.]*

[Frantically]: Mrs. Loman, Mrs. Loman!

I. Comment on the following text from the prologue to Ralph Ellison's
novel *The Invisible Man*:

I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like
the dodder you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have
been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach
me, they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their
imagination — indeed, everything and anything except me. I accidentally
rumped into a man. I sprang at him, seized his coat and demanded that he
apologize. In my outrage, I got out my knife and prepared to slit his
throat. He lay moaning on the asphalt, a man almost killed by a
phantom."

II. Compare and contrast the above works as regards the depiction of the
American Dream, indicating the one you like most. Give reasons.

V. Discuss, with illustrations from the text, Arthur Miller's use of
theatrical and dramatic devices in *Death of a Salesman*.

VII. Explain how Ralph Ellison's novel *The Invisible Man* is a typically
American picaresque self-quest.

Good Luck
Dr. Eman El-Meligi

E.M.E.



Section A: Objective Testing: Mark True or False:

1. Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* is an autobiographical "Memory Play".
2. Both TS Eliot's "Gerontion" and T. Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* hail capitalism.
3. Both works are characterized by the "Stream of Consciousness" technique and the "Interior Monologue". ()
4. "Gerontion" is a Medieval word. ()
5. "Here I am" positively inaugurates TS Eliot's "Gerontion". ()
6. Both Jim and Gerontion represent illusion.
7. Among the theatrical techniques in *The Glass Menagerie* is the screen. ()
8. The unicorn has practically saved Laura's life in Williams' play. ()
9. Amanda in Williams' play is paranoid. ()
10. "Gerontion" is an autobiographical poem. ()

Section B: Answer ONE question only:

I. Comment on "Gerontion", relating it to the philosophy and school of TS Eliot:

Thou hast nor youth nor age! Dreaming of both.

Here I am, an old man in a dry month,
Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain,

I was neither at the hot gates
Nor knee deep in the salt marsh.

My house is a decayed house,
The goat coughs at night in the field overhead;

Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds.

The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea,

Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter.

Comment on any text from Tennessee Williams' play *The Glass Menagerie*:

II. I'm not sure I know what you're talking about. What kind of glass is it?

Little articles of it, they're ornaments mostly! Most of them are little animals made of glass, the tiniest little animals in the world. Mother calls them a glass menagerie! This one is one of the oldest. It's nearly thirteen. See the single horn on his head?

Unicorns, aren't they extinct in the modern world?

III. A. *The Wingfield apartment is in the rear of the building, one of those vast hive-like conglomerations of cellular living units that flower as warthy growths in overcrowded urban centres of lower-middle-class population and are symptomatic of the impulse of this largest and fundamentally enslaved section of American society to avoid fluidity and differentiation and to exist and function as one interfused mass of automatism. The apartment faces an alley and is entered by a fire-escape, a structure of buildings filled with human desperation. Music]*

The play is memory, dimly lit, sentimental and not realistic. I'm the narrator of the play, and also a character in it.

B. I descended the steps of this fire escape and followed in the footsteps of my father. The cities swept about me like dead leaves, leaves that were brightly coloured but torn away from the branches.

IV. Explain with illustration the use of theatrical and dramatic techniques in the above play.

Good Luck
Eman Meligi

Section One: Answer ONLY ONE question:

- 1) After rejecting many artistic forms of the past, Ezra Pound's *Ode Pour L'election de son Sepulchre* discusses the form of art in the modern age and its relation to the mass massacres of WWI. Explain supporting your answer with ample example.
- 2) In his *Ode*, Ezra Pound offers many images of impossibility and others of change. What impossibility does he refer to and what is the relation between this impossibility and the necessity of change.

Section Two: Answer ONLY ONE question:

- 1) Discuss T. S. Eliot's vision of reality and human nature in *The Waste Land*, how he relates subjective visions to reach objective reality and how he renders this vision through the use of poetic techniques. Illustrate your answer with extensive examples from the poem.
- 2) In *The Waste Land*, Eliot offers a solution to the disease of humanity. What is this disease and how does he attempt to reach a cure? Explain with reference to the last part "What the Thunder Said" and the "Datta", "Dayadhavam", "Damyata" parts in order to reach the "shantih."

Section Three: Offer a detailed analysis of ONLY One of the following groups of lines from *The Waste Land* relating them to the rest of the poem:

- 1) Then spoke the thunder: DA
Datta: what have we given?
My friend, blood shaking my heart
The awful daring of a moment's surrender
Which an age of prudence can never retract
By this, and this only, we have existed
Which is not to be found in our obituaries
Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider
Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor
In our empty rooms.
- 2) APRIL is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
With a shower of rain

Dedicate no more than 40 minutes to any section. All my best Wishes.

