

Epreuve écrite

Examen de fin d'études secondaires 2007

Section: A

Branche: anglais (*Sixième annus*)

Numéro d'ordre du candidat

I. Guided Comprehension (30)

Heart of Darkness

'I am not disclosing any trade secrets. In fact the manager said afterwards that Mr Kurtz's methods had ruined the district. I have no opinion on that point, but I want you clearly to understand that there was nothing exactly profitable in these heads being there. They only showed that Mr Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him – some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence. Whether he knew of this deficiency himself I can't say. I think that the knowledge came to him at last – only at the very last. But the wilderness had found him out early, and had taken on him a terrible vengeance for the fantastic invasion. I think it had whispered to him things about himself which he did not know, things of which he had no conception till he took counsel with this great solitude – and the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating. It echoed loudly within him because he was hollow at the core ... I put down the glass, and the head that had appeared near enough to be spoken to seemed at once to have leaped away from me into inaccessible distance.

1. Situate this passage in its immediate context. (4)
2. What is the 'matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence'? Can you think of an example of his eloquence to illustrate your answer? (6)
3. How does the wilderness take 'a terrible vengeance' on Kurtz? (8)
4. How does Kurtz express the knowledge that comes to him 'at the very last'? (2)
5. Are there other any characters in the novel that are 'hollow at the core'? (4)
6. Do you think that Marlowe is different in this respect? Justify your answer. (6)