



**SERANGOON JUNIOR COLLEGE  
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2014**

**ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**HIGHER 1                      8811/01  
PAPER 1:                      READING LITERATURE**

**FRIDAY                      22 AUGUST 2014                      3 HOURS**

**TIME:                      0800 – 1100**

**VENUE:                      Hall**

Additional materials: Answer paper

Set texts may be taken into the examination room. They may bear underlining or highlighting. Any kind of folding or flagging of papers in texts (e.g. the use of post-its, tape flags or paper clips) is not permitted.

**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

Write your name, civics group on every answer sheet.

Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.

You may use a soft pencil for any diagrams or graphs.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Write your answers on the separate answer paper provided.

Answer **three** questions.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

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**This question paper consists of 7 printed pages. [Turn over]**

**Section A**  
**Answer one question in this section**

1

- Either** (a) Write a critical commentary on the following poem, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by language, style and form.

Death of a Naturalist

All year the flax-dam festered in the heart  
 Of the townland; green and heavy headed  
 Flax had rotted there, weighted down by huge sods.  
 Daily it sweltered in the punishing sun.  
 Bubbles gargled delicately, bluebottles 5  
 Wove a strong gauze of sound around the smell.  
 There were dragonflies, spotted butterflies,  
 But best of all was the warm thick slobber  
 Of frogspawn that grew like clotted water  
 In the shade of the banks. Here, every spring 10  
 I would fill jampots of the jellied  
 Specks to range on the window-sills at home,  
 On shelves at school, and wait and watch until  
 The fattening dots burst into nimble-  
 Swimming tadpoles. Miss Walls would tell us how 15  
 The daddy frog was called a bullfrog  
 And how he croaked and how the mammy frog  
 Laid hundreds of little eggs and this was  
 Frogspawn. You could tell the weather by frogs too  
 For they were yellow in the sun and brown 20  
 In rain.

Then one hot day when fields were rank  
 With cowdung in the grass the angry frogs  
 Invaded the flax-dam; I ducked through hedges  
 To a coarse croaking that I had not heard 25  
 Before. The air was thick with a bass chorus.  
 Right down the dam gross-bellied frogs were cocked  
 On sods; their loose necks pulsed like sails. Some hopped:  
 The slap and plop were obscene threats. Some sat  
 Poised like mud grenades, their blunt heads farting. 30  
 I sickened, turned, and ran. The great slime kings  
 Were gathered there for vengeance and I knew  
 That if I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it.

Seamus Heaney (1939 – 2013)

- Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following poem, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by language, style and form.

To Him Who Says He Loves

You tell me that you truly love;  
 Ah! know you well what love does mean?  
 Does neither whim nor fancy move  
 The rapture of your transient dream?

Tell me, when absent do you think 5  
 O'er ev'ry look and ev'ry sigh?  
 Do you in melancholy sink,  
 And hope and doubt you know not why?

When present, do you die to say 10  
 How much you love, yet fear to tell?  
 Does her breath melt your soul away?  
 A touch, your nerves with transport swell?

Or do you faint with sweet excess  
 Of pleasure rising into pain,  
 When hoping you may e'er possess 15  
 The object you aspire to gain?

The charms of every other fair  
 With coldness could you learn to view?  
 Fondly unchanged to her repair,  
 With transports ever young and new? 20

Could you for her, fame, wealth despise?  
 In poverty and toil feel blessed?  
 Drink sweet delusion from her eyes,  
 Or smile at ruin on her breast?

And tell me, at her loss or hate, 25  
 Would death your only refuge prove?  
 Ah! if in aught you hesitate -  
 Coward! you dare not say you love.

Charlotte Dacre (1771 – 1825)

**Section B**  
**Answer one question in this section**

2

**Either** (a) “Stevens’ portrait of Darlington remains a sympathetic one, because he cannot divorce his unquestioned loyalty to his lordship without undermining his own devotion to serving him all these years.”

In the light of this quotation, comment on the relationship between Stevens and Lord Darlington.

**Or** (b) Write a critical commentary on the following extract, relating it to the wider concerns of the novel.

It was then that Mr Harry Smith, the little man with the furrowed brow, leaned forward again and said: “That Mr Lindsay, he had it all wrong, see? Acting the way he did. Thought he was so much better than us, and he took us all for fools. Well, I can tell you, sir, he soon learnt otherwise. A lot of hard thinking and talking goes on in this place. There’s plenty of good strong opinion around and people here aren’t shy about expressing it. That’s something your Mr Lindsay learnt quickly enough.” 5

“He was no gentleman,” Mr Taylor said quietly. “He was no gentleman, that Mr Lindsay.”

“That’s right, sir,” Mr Harry Smith said. “You could tell just watching him he was no gentleman. All right, he had a fine house and good suits, but somehow you just knew. And so it proved in good time.” 10

There was a murmur of agreement, and for a moment all present seemed to be considering whether or not it would be proper to divulge to me the tale concerning this local personage. Then Mr Taylor broke the silence by saying: 15

“That’s true what Harry says. You can tell a true gentleman from a false one that’s just dressed in finery. Take yourself, sir. It’s not just the cut of your clothes, nor is it even the fine way you’ve got of speaking. There’s something else that marks you out as a gentleman. Hard to put your finger on it, but it’s plain for all to see that’s got eyes.” 20

This brought more sounds of agreement around the table.

“Dr Carlisle shouldn’t be long now, sir,” Mrs Taylor put in. “You’ll enjoy talking with him.”

“Dr Carlisle’s got it too,” Mr Taylor said. “He’s got it. He’s a true gent, that one.” 25

Mr Morgan, who had said little since his arrival, bent forward and said to me: “What do you suppose it is, sir? Maybe one that’s got it can better say what it is. Here we are all talking about who’s got it and who hasn’t, and we’re none the wiser about what we’re talking about. Perhaps you could enlighten us a bit, sir.”

A silence fell around the table and I could sense all the faces turn to me. I gave a small cough and said: 30

“It is hardly for me to pronounce upon qualities I may or may not possess. However, as far as this particular question is concerned, one would suspect that the quality being referred to might be most usefully termed ‘dignity’.”

I saw little point in attempting to explain this statement further. Indeed, I had merely given voice to the thoughts running through my mind while listening to the preceding talk and it is doubtful I would have said such a thing had the situation not suddenly demanded it of me. My response, however, seemed to cause much 35

satisfaction.

“There’s a lot of truth in what you say there, sir,” Mr Andrews said, nodding, 40  
and a number of other voices echoed this.

“That Mr Lindsay could certainly have done with a little more dignity,” Mrs  
Taylor said. “The trouble with his sort is they mistake acting high and mighty for  
dignity.”

“Mind you,” put in Mr Harry Smith, “with all respect for what you say, sir, it 45  
ought to be said. Dignity isn’t just something gentlemen have. Dignity’s something  
every man and woman in this country can strive for and get. You’ll excuse me, sir,  
but like I said before, we don’t stand on ceremony here when it comes to  
expressing opinions. And that’s my opinion for what it’s worth. Dignity’s not just  
something for gentlemen.” 50

I perceived, of course, that Mr Harry Smith and I were rather at cross  
purposes on this matter, and that it would be far too complicated a task for me to  
explain myself more clearly to these people. I thus judged it best simply to smile  
and say: “Of course, you’re quite correct.”

This had the immediate effect of dispelling the slight tension that had built in 55  
the room while Mr Harry Smith had been speaking. And Mr Harry Smith himself  
seemed to lose all inhibitions, for now he leaned forward and continued:

“That’s what we fought Hitler for, after all. If Hitler had had things his way, we’d  
just be slaves now. The whole world would be a few masters and millions upon  
millions of slaves. And I don’t need to remind anyone here, there’s no dignity to be 60  
had in being a slave. That’s what we fought for and that’s what we won. We won  
the right to be free citizens. And it’s one of the privileges of being born English  
that no matter who you are, no matter if you’re rich or poor, you’re born free and  
you’re born so that you can express your opinion freely, and vote in your member  
of parliament or vote him out. That’s what dignity’s really about, if you’ll excuse 65  
me, sir.”

(Day Three, Evening)

**Section C**  
**Answer one question in this section**

3

**Either** (a) 'The Duchess represents a new world order doomed to failure.'

Do you agree with this evaluation of the play?

**Or** (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the presentation of suffering here and elsewhere in the text.

|         |   |    |
|---------|---|----|
| DUCHESS | My laurel is all withered.  |    |
| CARIOLA | Look, madam, what a troop of armed men<br>Make toward us.   |    |
|         | Enter BOSOLA with a Guard, with vizards.  |    |
| DUCHESS | O, they are very welcome:   | 5  |
|         | When Fortune's wheel is overcharged with princes,<br>The weight makes it move swift. I would have my ruin<br>Be sudden. --I am your adventure, am I not?  |    |
| BOSOLA  | You are: you must see your husband no more--  |    |
| DUCHESS | What devil art thou that counterfeits heaven's<br>thunder?  | 10 |
| BOSOLA  | Is that terrible? I would have you tell me<br>Whether is that note worse that frights the silly birds<br>Out of the corn, or that which doth allure them<br>To the nets? You have hearkened to the last too much. | 15 |
| DUCHESS | O misery! Like to a rusty o'er-charged cannon,<br>Shall I never fly in pieces? Come, to what prison?  |    |
| BOSOLA  | To none.  |    |
| DUCHESS | Whither, then?  |    |
| BOSOLA  | To your palace.   | 20 |
| DUCHESS | I have heard<br>That Charon's boat serves to convey all o'er<br>The dismal lake, but brings none back again.<br>Your brothers mean you safety and pity.   |    |
| BOSOLA  |   |    |
| DUCHESS | Pity!   | 25 |
|         | With such a pity men preserve alive<br>Pheasants and quails, when they are not fat enough<br>To be eaten.   |    |
| BOSOLA  | These are your children?  |    |
| DUCHESS | Yes.  | 30 |
| BOSOLA  | Can they prattle?   |    |
| DUCHESS | No:   |    |
|         | But I intend, since they were born accurs'd,<br>Curses shall be their first language.   |    |
| BOSOLA  | Fie, madam,   | 35 |
| DUCHESS | Forget this base, low fellow.<br>Were I a man,<br>I'd beat that counterfeit face into thy other.  |    |
| BOSOLA  | One of no birth--   |    |
| DUCHESS | Say that he was born mean,<br>Man is most happy when 's own actions<br>Be arguments and examples of his virtue.   | 40 |

