



LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

8811/01

Paper 1 Reading Literature

3 hours

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 pages in text (e.g. use of post-its, tape flags or paper clips) is not permitted.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name, class and question number on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.
Write your answer to each question on a fresh sheet of paper.
Do not use paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid on your work.

Answer **three** questions, one from each of Sections A, B and C.
You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

At the end of the examination, fasten each of your answers **separately**.
All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

Section A

1

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

The Good

The good are vulnerable
 As any bird in flight,
 They do not think of safety,
 Are blind to possible extinction
 And when most vulnerable
 Are most themselves. 5

The good are real as the sun,
 Are best perceived through clouds
 Of casual corruption
 That cannot kill the luminous sufficiency
 That shines on city, sea and wilderness, 10
 Fastidiously revealing
 One man to another,
 Who yet will not accept
 Responsibilities of light. 15

The good incline to praise,
 To have the knack of seeing that
 The best is not destroyed
 Although forever threatened.
 The good go naked in all weathers,
 And by their nakedness rebuke 20
 The small protective sanities
 That hide men from themselves.
 The good are difficult to see
 Though open, rare, destructible;
 Always, they retain a kind of youth, 25
 The vulnerable grace
 Of any bird in flight,
 Content to be itself,
 Accomplished master and potential victim,
 Accepting what the earth or sky intends. 30

I think that I know one or two
 Among my friends.

Brendan Kennelly (born 1936)

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

The Bend in the Road

This is the place where the child
 Felt sick in the car and they pulled over
 And waited in the shadow of a house.
 A tall tree like a cat's tail waited too.
 They opened the windows and breathed 5
 Easily, while nothing moved. Then he was better.
 Over twelve years it has become the place
 Where you were sick one day on the way to the lake.
 You are taller now than us.
 The tree is taller, the house is quite covered in 10
 With green creeper, and the bend
 In the road is as silent as ever it was on that day.
 Piled high, wrapped lightly, like the one cumulus cloud
 In a perfect sky, softly packed like the air,
 Is all that went on in those years, the absences, 15
 The faces never long absent from thought,
 The bodies alive then and the airy space they took up
 When we saw them wrapped and sealed by sickness
 Guessing the piled weight of sleep
 We knew they could not carry for long; 20
 This is the place of their presence: in the tree, in the air.

Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin (born 1942)

Section B

EDITH WHARTON: *The Age of Innocence*

2

Either (a) 'An unforgiving machine where individual sentiments are ignored.'

Discuss the ways in which Wharton presents the social world of New York.

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the presentation of Newland Archer here and elsewhere in the novel.

It was a crowded night at Wallack's theatre.

The play was 'The Shaughraun,' with Dion Boucicault in the title role and Harry Montague and Ada Dyas as the lovers. The popularity of the admirable English company was at its height, and the Shaughraun always packed the house. In the galleries the enthusiasm was unreserved; in the stalls and boxes, people smiled a little at the hackneyed sentiments and clap-trap situations, and enjoyed the play as much as the galleries did. 5

There was one episode, in particular, that held the house from floor to ceiling. It was that in which Harry Montague, after a sad, almost monosyllabic scene of parting with Miss Dyas, bade her good-bye, and turned to go. The actress, who was standing near the mantelpiece and looking down into the fire, wore a gray cashmere dress without fashionable loopings or trimmings, moulded to her tall figure and flowing in long lines about her feet. Around her neck was a narrow black velvet ribbon with the ends falling down her back. 10

When her wooer turned from her she rested her arms against the mantelshelf and bowed her face in her hands. On the threshold he paused to look at her; then he stole back, lifted one of the ends of velvet ribbon, kissed it, and left the room without her hearing him or changing her attitude. And on this silent parting the curtain fell. 15

It was always for the sake of that particular scene that Newland Archer went to see 'The Shaughraun.' He thought the adieux of Montague and Ada Dyas as fine as anything he had ever seen Croisette and Bressant do in Paris, or Madge Robertson and Kendal in London; in its reticence, its dumb sorrow, it moved him more than the most famous histrionic outpourings. 20

On the evening in question the little scene acquired an added poignancy by reminding him—he could not have said why—of his leave-taking from Madame Olenska after their confidential talk a week or ten days earlier. 25

It would have been as difficult to discover any resemblance between the two situations as between the appearance of the persons concerned. Newland Archer could not pretend to anything approaching the young English actor's romantic good looks, and Miss Dyas was a tall red-haired woman of monumental build whose pale and pleasantly ugly face was utterly unlike Ellen Olenska's vivid countenance. Nor were Archer and Madame Olenska two lovers parting in heart-broken silence; they were client and lawyer separating after a talk which had given the lawyer the worst possible impression of the client's case. Wherein, then, lay the resemblance that made the young man's heart beat with a kind of retrospective excitement? It seemed to be in Madame Olenska's mysterious faculty of suggesting tragic and moving possibilities outside the daily run of experience. She had hardly ever said a word to him to produce this impression, but it was a part of her, either a projection of her mysterious and outlandish background or of something inherently dramatic, passionate and unusual in herself. Archer had always been inclined to think that chance and circumstance played a small part in shaping people's lots compared with their innate tendency to have things happen to them. This 30 35 40

tendency he had felt from the first in Madame Olenska. The quiet, almost 45
passive young woman struck him as exactly the kind of person to whom things
were bound to happen, no matter how much she shrank from them and went
out of her way to avoid them. The exciting fact was her having lived in an
atmosphere so thick with drama that her own tendency to provoke it had
apparently passed unperceived. It was precisely the odd absence of surprise in 50
her that gave him the sense of her having been plucked out of a very
maelstrom: the things she took for granted gave the measure of those she had
rebelled against.

Archer had left her with the conviction that Count Olenski's accusation was
not unfounded. The mysterious person who figured in his wife's past as 'the 55
secretary' had probably not been unrewarded for his share in her escape. The
conditions from which she had fled were intolerable, past speaking of, past
believing: she was young, she was frightened, she was desperate—what more
natural than that she should be grateful to her rescuer? The pity was that her
gratitude put her, in the law's eyes and the world's, on a par with her 60
abominable husband. Archer had made her understand this, as he was bound
to do; he had also made her understand that simplehearted kindly New York,
on whose larger charity she had apparently counted, was precisely the place
where she could least hope for indulgence.

Chapter 13

Section C

ARTHUR MILLER: *All My Sons*

3

Either (a) 'The play presents a world of divided loyalties.'

How far do you agree with this comment on *All My Sons*?

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the portrayal of Joe and Kate Keller's competing desires here and elsewhere in the play.

Keller: I'm askin' you. What am I, a stranger? I thought I had a family here. What happened to my family?

Mother: You've got a family. I'm simply telling you that I have no strength to think any more.

Keller: You have no strength. The minute there's trouble you have no strength. 5

Mother: Joe, you're doing the same thing again. All your life whenever there's trouble you yell at me and you think that settles it.

Keller: Then what do I do? Tell me, talk to me, what do I do?

Mother: Joe... I've been thinking this way. If he comes back — 10

Keller: What do you mean 'if'? He's comin' back!

Mother: I think if you sit him down and you — explain yourself. I mean you ought to make it clear to him that you know you did a terrible thing. (Not looking into his eyes.) I mean if he saw that you realize what you did. You see? 15

Keller: What ice does that cut?

Mother: (a little fearfully) I mean if you told him that you want to pay for what you did.

Keller: (sensing... quietly) How can I pay?

Mother: Tell him — You're willing to go to prison. (Pause.) 20

Keller: (struck, amazed) I'm willing to — ?

Mother: (quickly) You wouldn't go, he wouldn't ask you to go. But if you told him you wanted to, if he could feel that you wanted to pay, maybe he would forgive you.

Keller: He would forgive me! For what? 25

Mother: Joe, you know what I mean.

Keller: I don't know what you mean! You wanted money, so I made money. What must I be forgiven? You wanted money, didn't you?

Mother: I didn't want it that way.

Keller: I didn't want it that way, either! What difference is it what you want? I spoiled the both of you. I should've put him out when he was ten like I was put out, and make him earn his keep. Then he'd know how a buck is made in this world. Forgiven! I could live on a quarter a day myself, but I got a family so I — 30

Mother: Joe, Joe... It don't excuse it that you did it for the family.

Keller: It's got to excuse it!

Mother: There's something bigger than the family to him.

Keller: Nothin' is bigger!

Mother: There is to him.

Keller: There's nothing he could do that I wouldn't forgive. Because he's my son. Because I'm his father and he's my son. 40

Mother: Joe, I tell you —

Keller: Nothin's bigger than that. And you're going to tell him, you understand? I'm his father and he's my son, and if there's something bigger than that I'll put a bullet in my head!

Mother: You stop that! 45
Keller: You heard me. Now you know what to tell him. (*Pause. He moves from her. Halts.*) But he wouldn't put me away though... He wouldn't do that... Would he?
Mother: He loved you, Joe, you broke his heart.
Keller: But to put me away... 50
Mother: I don't know. I'm beginning to think we don't really know him. They say in the war he was such a killer. Here he was always afraid of mice. I don't know him. I don't know what he'll do.
Keller: Goddam, If Larry was alive he wouldn't act like this. He understood the way the world is made. He listened to me. To him the world had a forty-foot front, it ended at the building line. This one, everything bothers him. You make a deal, overcharge two cents, and his hair falls out. He don't understand money. Too easy, it came too easy. Yes, sir. Larry. That was a boy we lost. Larry. Larry. (*He slumps on chair in front of her*) What am I gonna do, Kate? 55
Mother: Joe, Joe, please... You'll be alright, nothing is going to happen. 60
Keller: (*desperately, lost*) For you, Kate, for both of you, that's all I ever lived for...
Mother: I know, darling, I know.

Act Three

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