



**SERANGOON JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2014**

ENGLISH LITERATURE

**HIGHER 2 9748/01
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.

This question paper consists of 8 printed pages. [Turn over]

Section A
Answer one question in this section

1

Either (a) Write a critical comparison of the following poems, considering in detail how language, style and form contribute to the presentation of mortality.

A

Bavarian Gentians

Not every man has gentians in his house
in soft September, at slow, sad Michaelmas¹.

Bavarian gentians, big and dark, only dark
darkening the daytime torchlike with the smoking blueness of
Pluto's² gloom, 5

ribbed and torch-like, with their blaze of darkness spread blue
down flattening into points, flattened under the sweep of white day
torch-flower of the blue-smoking darkness, Pluto's dark-blue daze,
black lamps from the halls of Dis³, burning dark blue,
giving off darkness, blue darkness, as Demeter's⁴ pale lamps give 10
off light,
lead me then, lead me the way.

Reach me a gentian, give me a torch!
let me guide myself with the blue, forked torch of a flower
down the darker and darker stairs, where blue is darkened on 15
blueness,

even where Persephone⁵ goes, just now, from the frosted September
to the sightless realm where darkness is awake upon the dark
and Persephone herself is but a voice 20
or a darkness invisible enfolded in the deeper dark
of the arms Plutonic, and pierced with the passion of densegloom,
among the splendour of torches of darkness, shedding darkness on
the lost bride and her groom.

D.H. Lawrence (1929)

¹ Michaelmas: the Feast of St Michael and all Angels, which takes place the beginning of autumn

² Pluto: Roman god of the underworld

³ Dis: A city in Hell where sinners who have committed the most grievous crimes are sent

⁴ Demeter: Greek goddess of the harvest

⁵ Persephone: Daughter of Demeter who was abducted by Pluto and deceived into living in the underworld for half a year

B

Continuing to Live

Continuing to live - that is, repeat
 A habit formed to get necessities -
 Is nearly always losing, or going without.
 It varies.

This loss of interest, hair, and enterprise - 5
 Ah, if the game were poker, yes,
 You might discard them, draw a full house!
 But it's chess.

And once you have walked the length of your mind, what 10
 You command is clear as a lading-list.
 Anything else must not, for you, be thought
 To exist.

And what's the profit? Only that, in time,
 We half-identify the blind impress
 All our behavings bear, may trace it home. 15
 But to confess,

On that green evening when our death begins,
 Just what it was, is hardly satisfying,
 Since it applied only to one man once,
 And that one dying. 20

Philip Larkin (1954)

- Or (b) Write a critical comparison of the following poems, considering in detail how language, style and form contribute to the portrayal of the female body.

homage to my hips

these hips are big hips
 they need space to
 move around in.
 they don't fit into little
 petty places. these hips 5
 are free hips.
 they don't like to be held back.
 these hips have never been enslaved,
 they go where they want to go
 they do what they want to do. 10
 these hips are mighty hips.
 these hips are magic hips.
 i have known them
 to put a spell on a man and
 spin him like a top! 15

Lucille Clifton (1987)

B

Heavy Women

Irrefutable, beautifully smug
 As Venus, pedestalled on a half-shell
 Shawled in blond hair and the salt
 Scrim of a sea breeze, the women
 Settle in their belling dresses. 5
 Over each weighty stomach a face
 Floats calm as a moon or a cloud.

Smiling to themselves, they meditate
 Devoutly as the Dutch bulb
 Forming its twenty petals. 10
 The dark still nurses its secret.
 On the green hill, under the thorn trees,
 They listen for the millennium,
 The knock of the small, new heart.

Pink-buttoned infants attend them. 15
 Looping wool, doing nothing in particular,
 They step among the archetypes.
 Dusk hoods them in Mary-blue
 While far off, the axle of winter
 Grinds round, bearing down the straw, 20
 The star, the wise grey men.

Sylvia Plath (1961)

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 60
dignity to be 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 65
you’ll excuse 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 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, The weight makes it move swift. I would have my ruin 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 thunder?	10
BOSOLA	Is that terrible? I would have you tell me Whether is that note worse that frights the silly birds Out of the corn, or that which doth allure them To the nets? You have hearkened to the last too much.	15
DUCHESS	O misery! Like to a rusty o'er-charged cannon, 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 That Charon's boat serves to convey all o'er The dismal lake, but brings none back again. Your brothers mean you safety and pity.	
BOSOLA		
DUCHESS	Pity!	25
	With such a pity men preserve alive Pheasants and quails, when they are not fat enough 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, Curses shall be their first language.	
BOSOLA	Fie, madam,	35
DUCHESS	Forget this base, low fellow. Were I a man, I'd beat that counterfeit face into thy other.	
BOSOLA	One of no birth--	
DUCHESS	Say that he was born mean, Man is most happy when 's own actions Be arguments and examples of his virtue.	40

BOSOLA A barren, beggarly virtue.
 DUCHESS I prithee who is greatest, can you tell?
 Sad tales befit my woe; I'll tell you one. 45
 A salmon, as she swam unto the sea,
 Met with a dog-fish, who encounters her
 With this rough language: 'Why art thou so bold
 To mix thyself with our high state of floods,
 Being no eminent courtier, but one 50
 That for the calmest, and fresh time o'th' year
 Dost live in shallow rivers, rank'st thyself
 With silly smelts and shrimps? and darest thou
 Pass by our dog-ship without reverence?'
 'O,' quoth the salmon, 'sister, be at peace. 55
 Thank Jupiter, we both have past the net!
 Our value never can be truly known,
 Till in the fisher's basket we be shown.
 I' th' market then my price may be the higher,
 Even when I am nearest to the cook and fire.' 60
 So, to great men the moral may be stretched;
 Men oft are valu'd high, when th' are most wretched.
 But come, whither you please. I am arm'd 'gainst misery;
 Bent to all sways of the oppressor's will.
 There's no deep valley but near some great hill.

END OF PAPER