



H2 LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9748/03

Paper 3 The Individual And Society In Literature

19 September 2014

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

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.
Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

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 all your work securely together.
All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

This document consists of **5** printed pages.

<i>Candidates must fill in this section</i>		<i>Examiner's Use only</i>	
<i>Name</i>		<i>Question No.</i>	<i>Total Score</i>
			25
<i>Registration No.</i>	<i>Class</i>		25
			25
		TOTAL:	75

Section A

1

- EITHER (a)** Write a critical appreciation of the poem *For the City that Nearly Broke Me* by Reginald Dwayne Betts, discussing ways in which it explores the theme of the individual and society in literature.

Knots like two dozen fists
 swayed with want from the boy's
 kaffiyeh¹, that black and white scarf
 with its useless hands clopping
 against the wind in protest
 against this boy and his somebody 5
 lost, against their own swaying
 in a dance the lost body has lost.
 A boy. A somebody lost. A body bodied
 in the lights of inauguration night
 when every light in the city flared 10
 with hope. Always losing, always
 a boy left with a dozen weights,
 small circles on strings pulling
 his head down to the ground.
 Downcast. Drop your bucket here 15
 and make the city yours and all
 that jive keeps him from running.
 Escaping the pavement, where
 bodies finally fall to rest.
 The kaffiyeh keeps him from 20
 bucking against the wind,
 hurtling himself to the Grey-
 hound² or Amtrak³ or I-95⁴
 with a book bag and hitched finger.
 His head shrouded in the black 25
 and white, the knots keeping
 his eyes down as he traverses
 neighborhoods with names like 3rd
 World, with names like a nation
 falling. And the coffin-voiced 30
 boy is who god tells us he will
 save, and so those swinging knots
 must be a kind of redemption,
 a way to see the bullets that bury
 you, constantly, as if death is 35
 the disguise hiding your wings.

¹ An Arab headdress, usually comprising a square piece of cloth folded and draped over the head, held in by a piece of cord wound around the head

² A major intercity bus service

³ A train service

⁴ Main highway on the East Coast of the United States

- OR (b) The following extract is from the novel *Invisible Man* (1952) by Ralph Ellison. The novel documents the experiences of an African-American living in the city of Harlem.

Write a critical appreciation of the extract, relating it more generally to your reading on the theme of the individual and society in literature.

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids -- and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads 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. 5

Nor is my invisibility exactly a matter of a bio-chemical accident to my epidermis. That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality. I am not complaining, nor am I protesting either. It is sometimes advantageous to be unseen, although it is most often rather wearing on the nerves. Then too, you're constantly being bumped against by those of poor vision. Or again, you often doubt if you really exist. You wonder whether you aren't simply a phantom in other people's minds. Say, a figure in a nightmare which the sleeper tries with all his strength to destroy. It's when you feel like this that, out of resentment, you begin to bump people back. And, let me confess, you feel that way most of the time. You ache with the need to convince yourself that you do exist in the real world, that you're a part of all the sound and anguish, and you strike out with your fists, you curse and you swear to make them recognize you. And, alas, it's seldom successful. 10 15 20

One night I accidentally bumped into a man, and perhaps because of the near darkness he saw me and called me an insulting name. I sprang at him, seized his coat lapels and demanded that he apologize. He was a tall blond man, and as my face came close to his he looked insolently out of his blue eyes and cursed me, his breath hot in my face as he struggled. I pulled his chin down sharp upon the crown of my head, butting him as I had seen the West Indians do, and I felt his flesh tear and the blood gush out, and I yelled, "Apologize! Apologize!" But he continued to curse and struggle, and I butted him again and again until he went down heavily, on his knees, profusely bleeding. I kicked him repeatedly, in a frenzy because he still uttered insults though his lips were frothy with blood. Oh yes, I kicked him! And in my outrage I got out my knife and prepared to slit his throat, right there beneath the lamplight in the deserted street, holding him by the collar with one hand, and opening the knife with my teeth -- when it occurred to me that the man had not seen me, actually; that he, as far as he knew, was in the midst of a walking nightmare! And I stopped the blade, slicing the air as I pushed him away, letting him fall back to the street. I stared at him hard as the lights of a car stabbed through the darkness. He lay there, moaning on the asphalt; a man almost killed by a phantom. It unnerved me. I was both disgusted and ashamed. I was like a drunken man myself, wavering about on weakened legs. Then I was amused. Something in this man's thick head had sprung out and beaten him within an inch of his life. I began to laugh at this crazy discovery. Would he have awakened at the point of death? Would Death himself have freed him for wakeful living? But I didn't linger. I ran away into the dark, laughing so hard I feared I might rupture myself. The next day I saw his picture in the Daily News, beneath a caption stating that he had been "mugged." Poor fool, poor blind fool, I thought with sincere compassion, mugged by an invisible man! 25 30 35 40 45

Section B

**Answer one question in this section, using two texts that you have studied.
The texts used in this section cannot be used in Section C.**

2

EITHER (a) Compare the ways **two** texts that you have studied portray the possibility of change.

Or (b) 'Man must be chained to collective action and collective thought for the sake of the common good.'

With this comment in mind, compare the ways in which **two** texts you have studied present the value of conformity.

Section C

Answer one question in this section, using one text that you have studied.
The text used in this section cannot be used in Section B.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

3

EITHER (a) Comment on Williams's portrayal of desire in the play.

Or (b) 'A story of cruelty and injustice and shortsightedness.'

How far and in what ways does this comment accurately describe the social world of *A Streetcar Named Desire*?

MAXINE HONG KINGSTON: *The Woman Warrior*

4

EITHER (a) How far and in what ways does Kingston's narrator manipulate truth and reality in *The Woman Warrior*?

Or (b) Discuss Kingston's treatment of violence in *The Woman Warrior*.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: *The Scarlet Letter*

5

EITHER (a) '...a sin of passion, not of principle, nor even purpose.' (Chapter 18)

Discuss Hawthorne's portrayal of human weakness in the light of this quotation.

Or (b) 'The novel is less about conflict between the individual and society, than it is about conflict within the individual.'

How far do you agree with this comment on *The Scarlet Letter*?