



LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9748/03

Paper 3 The Individual and Society in 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 ink 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

Answer one question in this section.

1

- Either (a)** The following passage is from the novel *TransAtlantic* (2013) by Colm McCann. The year is 1845. Frederick Douglass, a black American slave and a writer, has arrived in the city of Dublin, Ireland, to champion ideas of freedom at a time when Ireland was under British rule and on the verge of a major famine. At this point in the novel, Douglass is being hosted in the home of his Irish publisher, Richard Webb.

Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating it more generally to salient features of the theme the individual and society in literature.

- It's a pleasure to meet you, gentlemen.
 - An honour, Mr Douglass. We have read your book. A remarkable achievement.
 - Thank you.
 - There is much to learn from it. Much to admire in its style, even more in its content. 5
 - You're very kind.
 - And is Dublin to your liking?
 - It is livelier than Boston, yes.
- There was laughter all around and he was grateful for it, the manner in which it allowed him to ease his body out of his stiffness. Webb guided him towards a deep chair in the centre of the room. He glanced across to see Lily, the maid, pouring him a cup of tea. He liked his tea with an extraordinary amount of sugar. His weakness: a sweet tooth. Lily's face, half carved in light as she poured, sharp, pretty, alabaster. She glided across to him. Her cool white wrists. The china cup was very thin. It was said that this made the tea taste better. He could feel the cup trembling in his hands. The thinner the china, the louder the rattle. 10
- He hoped his manner of holding the teacup did not appear crude. He shifted slightly in his seat. He could feel his hands grow clammy again.
- Webb introduced him. Even in America, Douglass had seldom listened to the introductions that others made. They embarrassed him. Sometimes they made of him a caricature: the coloured conquistador, the gentleman slave, the American Orpheus. In the course of the introductions they would remark, invariably, that his father was a white man. As if it could not be otherwise. How he was taken from his mother, his siblings, whisked away, brought for a spell under the guidance of white benevolence. Douglass found the descriptions monotonous. The words dissolved in his head. He did not listen. He scanned the faces of the men. He could sense their uncertainty, a little hint of confusion around their eyes as he watched them, watching him. A slave. In a Dublin drawing room. So remarkably well-kept. 15
- He looked up to see that Webb had finished. A silence. The teacup shook in his hands. He allowed the quiet to edge up against the uncomfortable. He had found that being nervous made him tighter with his words, stronger, more careful.
- Douglass brought the saucer up to the bottom of the cup. 20
- I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and incur my own abhorrence. From my earliest recollection I date the entertainment of a deep conviction that slavery would not always be able to hold me within its foul embrace. Now, in the long curve of this journey, I find myself spinning a new strand and I appeal to you, gentlemen, to strive against the despotism, bigotry, and tyranny of those who might refuse me entry to this very room.* 25 30 35 40

AT THE END of his second week he wrote to Anna that he hadn't been called a *nigger* on Irish soil, not once, not yet anyway. He was hailed most everywhere he went. He wasn't yet sure what to make of it, it baffled him. There was something crystallizing inside him. He felt, for the first time ever maybe, that he could properly inhabit his skin. There was a chance that he was just a curio to them, but something in him felt aligned to those he met, and in all his twenty-seven years he hadn't seen anything like it. He wished she could be there to witness it. 45

It was a cold, grey, country under a hat of rain, but he could take the middle of the footpath, or board a stagecoach, or hail a hansom without apology. There was poverty everywhere, yes, but still he would take the poverty of a free man. No whips, No chains. No branding marks. 50

He was, of course, travelling in high company, but even on the roughest streets he had not heard any vitriol. He attracted a ferocious stare or two, but perhaps it was also because of the rather high cut at the back of his coat: Webb had already told him that he could perhaps afford a tad more modesty. 55

- Or (b)** Write a critical appreciation of the following poem (published in 1985) by Carol Ann Duffy (1955 –), relating it more generally to your reading on the theme of the individual and society in literature.

War Photographer

In his dark room he is finally alone
 with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.
 The only light is red and softly glows,
 as though this were a church and he
 a priest preparing to intone a Mass. 5
 Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays
 beneath his hands, which did not tremble then
 though seem to now. Rural England. Home again
 to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel, 10
 to fields which don't explode beneath the feet
 of running children in a nightmare heat.

Something is happening. A stranger's features
 faintly start to twist before his eyes,
 a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries 15
 of this man's wife, how he sought approval
 without words to do what someone must
 and how the blood stained into foreign dust.

A hundred agonies in black and white
 from which his editor will pick out five or six 20
 for Sunday's supplement. The reader's eyeballs prick
 with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.
 From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where
 he earns his living and they do not care.

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) 'The governing principle of life is survival, not class, or intellect.'

Compare the ways any **two** texts you have studied confirm or challenge this statement.

Or (b) Compare ways, and with what effects, any **two** texts you have studied explore unique individuality in society.

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.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: *The Scarlet Letter*

3

Either (a) 'I am mother's child,' answered the scarlet vision, 'and my name is Pearl!'

Discuss the presentation and significance of Pearl in relation to the novel's plot progression and themes.

Or (b) Consider the critical significance of the narrative structure of *The Scarlet Letter*, relating this to concerns central to the theme of the individual and society.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

9

Either (a) What, for you, is the critical significance of the Blanche-Stanley relationship for the central conflict of the play?

Or (b) 'Blanche, in spite of her weakness, is the noblest creation in the play.'

Consider Williams's ways of presenting Blanche in relation to her society in the light of this comment.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

10

Either (a) 'The core of human tragedy has very little to do with society and everything to do with the individual.'

Discuss the presentation of Othello in the light of this statement.

Or (b) In what ways and with what effects does Shakespeare make use of parallels between Emilia and Desdemona?

Copyright acknowledgements:

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Question 1b © Carol Ann Duffy; *New Selected Poems 1984-2004*; Picador, 2004.

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