



PIONEER JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9748/02

Higher 2

Paper 2 Victorian Literature

19 September 2014

Only the set texts for *Great Expectations*, *Jane Eyre* and Browning's poetry may be taken into the examination room.

They may bear underlining or highlighting.

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

Additional materials: Writing Paper

3 Hours

Candidate's Name: _____ **CT Group:** _____

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your statutory name and CT group at the top of every sheet of answer paper used.

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

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

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Answer three questions, one from each of Sections A, B & C.

At the end of the examination, fasten each answer script securely together.

Submit each answer script separately.

Submit question paper separately.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

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

This question paper consists of 7 printed pages and 1 blank page.

SECTION A

THE UNSEEN

1

- Either (a)** Write a critical commentary of the following passage from *The Woman in White* (1859) by Wilkie Collins, relating its themes and style to key features of the period.

Marian Halcombe writes about the Italian Count Fosco in her journal.

What of the Count?

This in two words: He looks like a man who could tame anything. If he had married a tigress, instead of a woman, he would have tamed the tigress. If he had married me, I should have made his cigarettes, as his wife does—I should have held my tongue when he looked at me, as she holds hers.

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I am almost afraid to confess it, even to these secret pages. The man has interested me, has attracted me, has forced me to like him. In two short days he has made his way straight into my favourable estimation, and how he has worked the miracle is more than I can tell.

It absolutely startles me, now he is in my mind, to find how plainly I see him!—how much more plainly than I see Sir Percival, or Mr. Fairlie, or Walter Hartright, or any other absent person of whom I think, with the one exception of Laura herself! I can hear his voice, as if he was speaking at this moment. I know what his conversation was yesterday, as well as if I was hearing it now. How am I to describe him? There are peculiarities in his personal appearance, his habits, and his amusements, which I should blame in the boldest terms, or ridicule in the most merciless manner, if I had seen them in another man. What is it that makes me unable to blame them, or to ridicule them in HIM?

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For example, he is immensely fat. Before this time I have always especially disliked corpulent humanity. I have always maintained that the popular notion of connecting excessive grossness of size and excessive good-humour as inseparable allies was equivalent to declaring, either that no people but amiable people ever get fat, or that the accidental addition of so many pounds of flesh has a directly favourable influence over the disposition of the person on whose body they accumulate. I have invariably combated both these absurd assertions by quoting examples of fat people who were as mean, vicious, and cruel as the leanest and the worst of their neighbours. I have asked whether Henry the Eighth was an amiable character? Whether Pope Alexander the Sixth was a good man? Whether Mr. Murderer and Mrs. Murderess Manning were not both unusually stout people? Whether hired nurses, proverbially as cruel a set of women as are to be found in all England, were not, for the most part, also as fat a set of women as are to be found in all England?—and so on, through dozens of other examples, modern and ancient, native and foreign, high and low. Holding these strong opinions on the subject with might and main as I do at this moment, here, nevertheless, is Count Fosco, as fat as Henry the Eighth himself, established in my favour, at one day's notice, without let or hindrance from his own odious corpulence. Marvellous indeed!

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Is it his face that has recommended him?

It may be his face. He is a most remarkable likeness, on a large scale, of the

great Napoleon. His features have Napoleon's magnificent regularity—his expression recalls the grandly calm, immovable power of the Great Soldier's face. 40
 This striking resemblance certainly impressed me, to begin with; but there is something in him besides the resemblance, which has impressed me more. I think the influence I am now trying to find is in his eyes. They are the most unfathomable grey eyes I ever saw, and they have at times a cold, clear, beautiful, irresistible glitter in them which forces me to look at him, and yet causes me sensations, when I 45
 do look, which I would rather not feel. Other parts of his face and head have their strange peculiarities. His complexion, for instance, has a singular sallowness, so much at variance with the dark-brown colour of his hair, that I suspect the hair of being a wig, and his face, closely shaven all over, is smoother and freer from all marks and wrinkles than mine, though (according to Sir Percival's account of him) he 50
 is close on sixty years of age. But these are not the prominent personal characteristics which distinguish him, to my mind, from all the other men I have ever seen. The marked peculiarity which singles him out from the rank and file of humanity lies entirely, so far as I can tell at present, in the extraordinary expression and extraordinary power of his eyes. 55

His manner and his command of our language may also have assisted him, in some degree, to establish himself in my good opinion. He has that quiet deference, that look of pleased, attentive interest in listening to a woman, and that secret gentleness in his voice in speaking to a woman, which, say what we may, we can none of us resist. Here, too, his unusual command of the English language 60
 necessarily helps him. I had often heard of the extraordinary aptitude which many Italians show in mastering our strong, hard, Northern speech; but, until I saw Count Fosco, I had never supposed it possible that any foreigner could have spoken English as he speaks it. There are times when it is almost impossible to detect, by his accent that he is not a countryman of our own, and as for fluency, there are very 65
 few born Englishmen who can talk with as few stoppages and repetitions as the Count. He may construct his sentences more or less in the foreign way, but I have never yet heard him use a wrong expression, or hesitate for a moment in his choice of a word.

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following extract from the play *Charity* (1874) by W. S. Gilbert, relating its concerns to key features of the period.

In this extract, Mr Smailey is visiting Mrs. Van Brugh to discuss matters regarding his son's impending marriage to her daughter. He is concerned about her charity work, reforming and helping "fallen women".

MR. SMAILEY:	It is currently reported in the village that you have taken a miserable woman from the streets and established her in the character of a respectable workwoman within a hundred yards of this spot. Moreover, I have been informed that you have, for some years past, been in the habit of searching out women of bad character who profess penitence, with the view of enabling them to earn their living in the society of blameless Christians.	5
MRS. VAN BRUGH:	I have.	
MR. SMAILEY:	I tell you at once that I am loth to believe this thing.	
MRS. VAN BRUGH	(<i>WITH INDIGNANT SURPRISE</i>): Why are you loth to believe this thing?	10
MR. SMAILEY:	Why? [<i>RISES.</i>] Because its audacity, its want of principle, and, above all, its unspeakable indelicacy, shock me beyond power of expression.	
MRS. VAN BRUGH:	Mr. Smailey, is it possible that you are speaking deliberately? Think of any blameless woman whom you love and honour, and who is loved and honoured of all. Think of the shivering outcast whose presence is contamination, whose touch is horror unspeakable, whose very existence is an unholy stain on God's earth. Woman - loved, honoured, courted by all. Woman - shunned, loathed, and unutterably despised, but still - Woman. I do not plead for those whose advantages of example and education render their fall ten thousand times more culpable. Let others speak for such as they. [<i>WITH A BROKEN VOICE</i>] It may be that something is to be said, even for them. I plead for those who have had the world against them from the first - who with blunted weapons and untutored hands have fought society single-handed, and fallen in the unequal fight. God help them!	15 20 25
MR. SMAILEY:	Mrs. Van Brugh, I have no desire to press hardly on any fellow-creature; but society, the grand arbiter in these matters, has decided that a woman who has once forfeited her moral position shall never regain it.	30
MRS. VAN BRUGH:	Even though her repentance be sincere and beyond doubt?	
MR. SMAILEY:	Even so.	
MRS. VAN BRUGH:	Even though she fell unprotected, unadvised, perishing with want and chilled with despair?	35
MR. SMAILEY:	Even so. For such a woman there is no excuse - for such a woman there is no pardon.	
MRS. VAN BRUGH:	You mean no pardon on earth?	
MR. SMAILEY:	Of course I mean no pardon on earth. What can I have to do with pardon elsewhere?	40
MRS. VAN BRUGH:	Nothing. Mr. Smailey, before you go let me tell you that I am inexpressibly shocked and pained at the terrible theory you have	

advanced. *[HE ENDEAVOURS TO SPEAK.]* Oh, understand
me, I do not charge you with exceptional heartlessness. You 45
represent the opinions of society, and society is fortunate in its
mouthpiece. Heaven teaches that there is a pardon for every
penitent. Earth teaches that there is one sin for which there is no
pardon - when the sinner is a woman! *[RUTH HAS ENTERED.*
SHE IS QUIETLY AND DECENTLY DRESSED, AND CARRIES 50
A PARCEL OF NEEDLEWORK IN HER HAND.]

MR. SMAILEY: *(ASIDE):* Mrs. Van Brugh, pray be quiet; we are observed.
MRS. VAN BRUGH: By the subject of our conversation. *[EXIT MRS. VAN BRUGH.]*
RUTH: I beg pardon - I thought the lady was alone. *[GOING.]*
MR. SMAILEY: Stop, woman. *[SHE TURNS AND ADVANCES.]* Don't - don't 55
approach me - we have nothing in common. Listen at a
distance. Mrs. Van Brugh has thought proper to place you on a
pedestal that levels you, socially, with respectable Christians. In
doing so, I consider that she has insulted respectable Christians.
She thinks proper to suffer you to enter **my** presence. In so 60
doing I consider that she has insulted me. I desire you to
understand that when a woman of your stamp enters the
presence of a Christian gentleman, she ...

RUTH: *(WHO HAS BEEN LOOKING AT HIM IN WONDER DURING*
THIS SPEECH): Smailey! That's never **you!** *[MR. SMAILEY* 65
FALLS BACK IN HIS CHAIR.] Ay, Smailey, it's Ruth Tredgett.

MR. SMAILEY: *(VERY CONFUSED):* I did not know whom I was speaking to.
RUTH: But you knowed **what** you was speakin' to, Jonas Smailey. Go
on. I'm kinder curious to hear what **you've** got to say about a 70
woman o' my stamp. I'm kinder curious to hear wot Jonas
Smailey's got to say about his own work.

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)** By comparing and contrasting the work of two Victorian writers that you have studied, discuss their presentation of abnormal states of mind.
- Or (b)** Compare and contrast the ways in which two writers of the period you have studied have explored religious issues.

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.

CHARLES DICKENS: *Great Expectations*

3

Either (a) “Joe is the sole moral compass of the novel.”

Consider the validity of this statement.

Or (b) “The love of money is the root of all evil.”

To what extent is this illustrated in *Great Expectations*?

CHARLOTTE BRONTE: *Jane Eyre*

4

Either (a) Consider the significance of Thornfield Hall and its inhabitants to the meaning and atmosphere of *Jane Eyre*.

Or (b) “By ending Jane’s journey with her happy marriage to Rochester, Bronte diminishes the novel’s message of female independence and emancipation.”

To what extent do you agree with this assessment of the novel?

ROBERT BROWNING: *Selected Poems*

5

Either (a) How and with what effects does Browning present distinct individual voices in his poems?

You should refer in detail to **two** or **three** poems or sections of longer poems in your answer.

Or (b) “Despite the foreign settings and different time periods in his poetry, Browning’s key concerns are distinctly Victorian.” Consider Browning’s dramatic monologues in the light of this remark.

You should refer in detail to **two** or **three** poems or sections of longer poems in your answer.

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