



**NANYANG JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
2015**

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9748/03

Paper 3 The Individual and Society in Literature

Saturday, 19 September 2015

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

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your CT and name on all the work you hand in.

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.

Please begin each question on a fresh sheet of paper.

At the end of the examination, fasten your work according to sections.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

SECTION A

Answer one question in this section

1

Either

- (a) The extract is from *Major Barbara* (first performed in 1905), by George Bernard Shaw. In the scene below, Andrew Undershaft, an extremely successful arms industrialist who has recently reunited with his family after years of estrangement, and his wife Lady Britomart, speak to their son Stephen about his career prospects. Lazarus is Undershaft's business partner.

Write a critical appreciation of the extract, paying particular attention to the ways in which it explores the theme of individual and society.

- UNDERSHAFT: It is settled that you do not ask for the succession to the cannon business
- STEPHEN: I hope it is settled that I repudiate the cannon business.
- UNDERSHAFT: Come, come! Don't be so devilishly sulky: it's boyish. Freedom should be generous. Besides, I owe you a fair start in life in exchange for disinheriting you. You can't become prime minister all at once. Haven't you a turn for something? What about literature, art and so forth? 5
- STEPHEN: I have nothing of the artist about me, either in faculty or character, thank Heaven!
- UNDERSHAFT: A philosopher, perhaps? Eh? 10
- STEPHEN: I make no such ridiculous pretension.
- UNDERSHAFT: Just so. Well, there is the army, the navy, the Church, the Bar. The Bar requires some ability. What about the Bar?
- STEPHEN: I have not studied law. And I am afraid I have not the necessary push—I believe that is the name barristers give to their vulgarity—for success in pleading. 15
- UNDERSHAFT: Rather a difficult case, Stephen. Hardly anything left but the stage, is there? [Stephen makes an impatient movement]. Well, come! Is there anything you know or care for?
- STEPHEN: *[rising and looking at him steadily]* I know the difference between right and wrong. 20
- UNDERSHAFT: *[hugely tickled]* You don't say so! What! no capacity for business, no knowledge of law, no sympathy with art, no pretension to philosophy; only a simple knowledge of the secret that has puzzled all the philosophers, baffled all the lawyers, muddled all the men of business, and ruined most of the artists: the secret of right and wrong. Why, man, you're a genius, master of masters, a god! At twenty-four, too! 25
- STEPHEN: *[keeping his temper with difficulty]* You are pleased to be facetious. I pretend to nothing more than any honourable English gentleman claims as his birthright *[he sits down angrily]*. 30
- UNDERSHAFT: Oh, that's everybody's birthright. Look at poor little Jenny Hill, the Salvation lassie! She would think you were laughing at her if you asked her to stand up in the street and teach grammar or geography or mathematics or even drawingroom dancing; but it never occurs to her to doubt that she can teach morals and religion. You are all alike, you respectable people. You can't tell me the bursting strain of a ten-inch gun, which is a very simple matter; but you all think you can tell me the bursting strain of a man under temptation. You daren't handle high 35

explosives; but you're all ready to handle honesty and truth and justice and the whole duty of man, and kill one another at that game. What a country! what a world! 40

LADY

BRITOMART: *[uneasily]* What do you think he had better do, Andrew?

UNDERSHAFT: Oh, just what he wants to do. He knows nothing; and he thinks he knows everything. That points clearly to a political career. Get him a private secretaryship to someone who can get him an Under Secretaryship; and then leave him alone. He will find his natural and proper place in the end on the Treasury bench. 45

STEPHEN: *[springing up again]* I am sorry, sir, that you force me to forget the respect due to you as my father. I am an Englishman; and I will not hear the Government of my country insulted. *[He thrusts his hands in his pockets, and walks angrily across to the window].* 50

UNDERSHAFT: *[with a touch of brutality]* The government of your country! I am the government of your country: I, and Lazarus. Do you suppose that you and half a dozen amateurs like you, sitting in a row in that foolish gabble shop¹, can govern Undershaft and Lazarus? No, my friend: you will do what pays *us*. You will make war when it suits us, and keep peace when it doesn't. You will find out that trade requires certain measures when we have decided on those measures. When I want anything to keep my dividends up, you will discover that my want is a national need. When other people want something to keep my dividends down, you will call out the police and military. And in return you shall have the support and applause of my newspapers, and the delight of imagining that you are a great statesman. Government of your country! Be off with you, my boy, and play with your caucuses and leading articles and historic parties and great leaders and burning questions and the rest of your toys. I am going back to my counting house to pay the piper and call the tune. 65

STEPHEN: *[actually smiling, and putting his hand on his father's shoulder with indulgent patronage]* Really, my dear father, it is impossible to be angry with you. You don't know how absurd all this sounds to *me*. You are very properly proud of having been industrious enough to make money; and it is greatly to your credit that you have made so much of it. But it has kept you in circles where you are valued for your money and deferred to for it, instead of in the doubtless very old-fashioned and behind-the-times public school and university where I formed my habits of mind. It is natural for you to think that money governs England; but you must allow me to think I know better. 70 75

¹ Place where rapid and unintelligible talk occurs; reference to Parliament

Or

- (b) The extract below is from *The Secret Agent* (1907) by Joseph Conrad. The Professor is an English anarchist, who carries a bomb in his pocket as a threat against those who would arrest him.

Write a critical appreciation of the extract, relating it to the theme of individual and society in literature.

The Professor had turned into a street to the left, and walked along, with his head carried rigidly erect, in a crowd whose every individual almost overtopped his stunted stature. It was vain to pretend to himself that he was not disappointed. But that was mere feeling; the stoicism of his thought could not be disturbed by this or any other failure. Next time, or the time after next, a telling stroke would be delivered—something really startling—a blow fit to open the first crack in the imposing front of the great edifice of legal conceptions sheltering the atrocious injustice of society. Of humble origin, and with an appearance really so mean as to stand in the way of his considerable natural abilities, his imagination had been fired early by the tales of men rising from the depths of poverty to positions of authority and affluence. The extreme, almost ascetic purity of his thought, combined with an astounding ignorance of worldly conditions, had set before him a goal of power and prestige to be attained without the medium of arts, graces, tact, wealth—by sheer weight of merit alone. On that view he considered himself entitled to undisputed success. His father, a delicate dark enthusiast with a sloping forehead, had been an itinerant and rousing preacher of some obscure but rigid Christian sect—a man supremely confident in the privileges of his righteousness. In the son, individualist by temperament, once the science of colleges had replaced thoroughly the faith of conventicles¹, this moral attitude translated itself into a frenzied puritanism of ambition. He nursed it as something secularly holy. To see it thwarted opened his eyes to the true nature of the world, whose morality was artificial, corrupt, and blasphemous. The way of even the most justifiable revolutions is prepared by personal impulses disguised into creeds. The Professor's indignation found in itself a final cause that absolved him from the sin of turning to destruction as the agent of his ambition. To destroy public faith in legality was the imperfect formula of his pedantic fanaticism; but the subconscious conviction that the framework of an established social order cannot be effectually shattered except by some form of collective or individual violence was precise and correct. He was a moral agent—that was settled in his mind. By exercising his agency with ruthless defiance he procured for himself the appearances of power and personal prestige. That was undeniable to his vengeful bitterness. It pacified its unrest; and in their own way the most ardent of revolutionaries are perhaps doing no more but seeking for peace in common with the rest of mankind—the peace of soothed vanity, of satisfied appetites, or perhaps of appeased conscience.

Lost in the crowd, miserable and undersized, he meditated confidently on his power, keeping his hand in the left pocket of his trousers, grasping lightly the india-rubber ball, the supreme guarantee of his sinister freedom; but after a while he became disagreeably affected by the sight of the roadway thronged with vehicles and of the pavement crowded with men and women. He was in a long, straight street, peopled by a mere fraction of an immense multitude; but all

¹ A secret or unauthorized meeting, especially for religious worship. Here, it refers to people who did not conform to mainstream religious beliefs.

round him, on and on, even to the limits of the horizon hidden by the enormous piles of bricks, he felt the mass of mankind mighty in its numbers. They swarmed numerous like locusts, industrious like ants, thoughtless like a natural force, pushing on blind and orderly and absorbed, impervious to sentiment, to logic, to terror too perhaps. 45

That was the form of doubt he feared most. Impervious to fear! Often while walking abroad, when he happened also to come out of himself, he had such moments of dreadful and sane mistrust of mankind. What if nothing could move them? Such moments come to all men whose ambition aims at a direct grasp upon humanity—to artists, politicians, thinkers, reformers, or saints. A despicable emotional state this, against which solitude fortifies a superior character; and with severe exultation the Professor thought of the refuge of his room, with its padlocked cupboard, lost in a wilderness of poor houses, the hermitage of the perfect anarchist. 50 55

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 or contrast the ways in which any **two** texts you have studied make use of contrasting individuals or individual perspectives in their presentation of society.
- Or (b)** Compare or contrast the ways in which any **two** texts you have studied present individuals who have achieved societal success.

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.

MAXINE HONG KINGSTON: *The Woman Warrior*

3

Either (a) 'You can't belong. You don't have the hardness for this country.'
(*At the Western Palace*)

Explore Kingston's presentation of individuals who are rejected by society.

Or (b) Discuss Kingston's portrayal of male characters in *The Woman Warrior*, considering what it contributes to the depiction of the individual and society in the novel.

BOEY KIM CHENG: *Another Place*

4

Either (a) Discuss the ways in which Boey Kim Cheng present the relationship between the tourist and the societies that they visit. You should refer to at least **two** poems in your answer.

Or (b) In what ways does Boey present individuals who retreat from society?
You should refer to at least **two** poems in your answer.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

5

Either (a) 'Stanley, tell us a joke, tell us a funny story to make us all laugh.'
(Blanche: Scene 8)

Discuss Williams's use of humour in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, considering what it contributes to the depiction of the individual and society in the play.

Or (b) 'The night is filled with inhuman voices like cries in a jungle.' (Scene 10)

Explore Williams's presentation of individuals living in an uncivilised society.

END OF PAPER