



**SERANGOON JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2015**

ENGLISH LITERATURE

HIGHER 2 9748/03
PAPER 3: The Individual and Society

THURSDAY

27 AUGUST 2015

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 6 printed pages and 0 blank pages. [Turn over]

Section A

Answer one question in this section

1

Either

- (a) Write a critical commentary of the following poem, considering in detail ways it explores the theme of the individual and society.

Mending Wall

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
 That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
 And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
 And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
 The work of hunters is another thing: 5
 I have come after them and made repair
 Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
 But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
 To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
 No one has seen them made or heard them made, 10
 But at spring mending-time we find them there.
 I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
 And on a day we meet to walk the line
 And set the wall between us once again.
 We keep the wall between us as we go. 15
 To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
 And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
 We have to use a spell to make them balance:
 'Stay where you are until our backs are turned!' 20
 We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
 Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,
 One on a side. It comes to little more:
 There where it is we do not need the wall:
 He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
 My apple trees will never get across 25
 And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
 He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'
 Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
 If I could put a notion in his head:
 'Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it 30
 Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
 Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
 What I was walling in or walling out,
 And to whom I was like to give offense.
 Something there is that doesn't love a wall, 35
 That wants it down.' I could say 'Elves' to him,
 But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
 He said it for himself. I see him there
 Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
 In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed. 40
 He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
 Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
 He will not go behind his father's saying,
 And he likes having thought of it so well
 He says again, 'Good fences make good neighbors.' 45

Robert Frost (1914)

- Or (b) The following extract is taken from the novel, *The Bell Jar* (1963), by Sylvia Plath. Here, the protagonist, a young, single woman, is waiting at a clinic to get a birth control device fitted.

Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating its themes to the topic of the individual and society.

I waited for the doctor, wondering if I should bolt. I knew what I was doing was illegal -- in Massachusetts, anyway, because the state was cram-jam full of Catholics - but Doctor Nolan said this doctor was an old friend of hers, and a wise man.

"What's your appointment for?" the brisk, white-uniformed receptionist wanted to know, ticking my name off on a notebook list. 5

"What do you mean, *for*?" I hadn't thought anybody but the doctor himself would ask me that, and the communal waiting room was full of other patients waiting for other doctors, most of them pregnant or with babies, and I felt their eyes on my flat, virgin stomach.

The receptionist glanced up at me, and I blushed. 10

"A fitting, isn't it?" she said kindly. "I only wanted to make sure so I'd know what to charge you. Are you a student?"

"Ye-es."

"That will only be half-price then. Five dollars, instead of ten. Shall I bill you?"

I was about to give my home address, where I would probably be by the time the bill arrived, but then I thought of my mother opening the bill and seeing what it was for. The only other address I had was the innocuous box number which people used who didn't want to advertise the fact they lived in an asylum. But I thought the receptionist might recognize the box number, so I said, "I better pay now," and peeled five dollar notes off the roll in my pocketbook. 15 20

The five dollars was part of what Philomena Guinea had sent me as a sort of getwell present. I wondered what she would think if she knew to what use her money was being put.

Whether she knew it or not, Philomena Guinea was buying my freedom,

"What I hate is the thought of being under a man's thumb," I had told Doctor Nolan. "A man doesn't have a worry in the world, while I've got a baby hanging over my head like a big stick, to keep me in line." 25

"Would you act differently if you didn't have to worry about a baby?"

"Yes," I said, "*but* . . ." and I told Doctor Nolan about the married woman lawyer and her Defense of Chastity. 30

Doctor Nolan waited until I was finished. Then she burst out laughing.

"Propaganda!" she said, and scribbled the name and address of this doctor on a prescription pad.

I leafed nervously through an issue of *Baby Talk*. The fat, bright faces of babies beamed up at me, page after page -- bald babies, chocolate-colored babies, Eisenhowerfaced¹ babies, babies rolling over for the first time, babies reaching for rattles, babies eating their first spoonful of solid food, babies doing all the little tricky things it takes to grow up, step by step, into an anxious and unsettling world. 35

I smelt a mingling of Pabulum and sour milk and salt-cod-stinky diapers and felt sorrowful and tender. HOW easy having babies seemed to the women around me! Why was I so unmaternal and apart? Why couldn't I dream of devoting myself to baby after fat puling baby like Dodo Conway? If I had to wait on a baby all day, I would go mad. I looked at the baby in the lap of the woman opposite. I had no idea how old it was, I never did, with babies -- for all I knew it could talk a blue streak and had twenty 40

¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower (October 14, 1890 – March 28, 1969) - was the 34th President of the United States from 1953 until 1961.

teeth behind its pursed, pink lips. It held its little wobby head up on its shoulders -- it didn't seem to have a neck -- and observed me with a wise, Platonic expression. 45

The baby's mother smiled and smiled, holding that baby as if it were the first wonder of the world. I watched the mother and the baby for some clue to their mutual satisfaction, but before I had discovered anything, the doctor called me in.

"You'd like a fitting," he said cheerfully, and I thought with relief that he wasn't the sort of doctor to ask awkward questions. I had toyed with the idea of telling him I planned to be married to a sailor as soon as his ship docked at the Charlestown Navy Yard, and the reason I didn't have an engagement ring was because we were too poor, but at the last moment I rejected that appealing story and simply said "Yes." 50

I climbed up on the examination table, thinking: "I am climbing to freedom, freedom from fear, freedom from marrying the wrong person, like Buddy Willard, just because of sex, freedom from the Florence Crittenden Homes² where all the poor girls go who should have been fitted out like me, because what they did, they would do anyway, regardless. . . ." 55

As I rode back to the asylum with my box in the plain brown paper wrapper on my lap I might have been Mrs. Anybody coming back from a day in town with a Schrafft's³ cake for her maiden aunt or a Filene's⁴ Basement hat. Gradually the suspicion that Catholics had X-ray eyes diminished, and I grew easy. I had done well by my shopping privileges, I thought. 60

I was my own woman. 65

The next step was to find the proper sort of man.

² Florence Crittenden Homes - families sent unwed mothers to Crittenden homes to hide them from public view and avoid shame. Women in these homes were required to give up their children for adoption

³ Schrafft's - a candy, chocolate and cake company based in Sullivan Square, Charlestown, Massachusetts.

⁴ Filene's - Filene's was an American department store, headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts

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 ways in which authors of **two texts** use language in establishing the relationship between the individual and society.

Or **(b)** “Excess of liberty, whether it lies in state or individuals, seems only to pass into excess of slavery.” (Plato, *The Republic*)

With this comment in mind, compare the ways in which two texts you have studied present the individual’s pursuit of liberty from society.

Section C

Answer one question in this section.

MAXINE HONG KINGSTON: *THE WOMAN WARRIOR*

3

Either

- (a) “The quest for selfhood is one fraught with uncertainty.”

Do you agree with this assessment of the novel?

Or

- (b) Comment on Kingston’s use of narratorial perspective in establishing the relationship between the individual and society.

PHILIP LARKIN: From *Collected Poems*

3

Either

- (a) Discuss Larkin’s presentation of modern life in his poetry. You should refer to at least two poems in your selection.

Or

- (b) “A poet of contradictions.”

Assess the validity of the above statement, relating your response to the larger concerns of the individual and society. You should refer to at least two poems in your selection.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

3

Either

- (a) Discuss the roles and characterization of the women in *Othello*, relative to their place in the society of the play.

Or

- (b) “Mere Man, against the bulwark of Society.”

Comment on the quotation above as an assessment of the characters’ relationships with society.

END OF PAPER