

YISHUN JUNIOR COLLEGE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2016

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH HIGHER 2

9748/03

Paper 3 The Individual and Society in Literature

Thursday 22 August 2016
0800 – 1100h
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 name and CTG 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.

At the end of the examination, hand in each of your three answers **separately**.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

This document consists of **7** printed pages and **1** blank page.

SECTION A

Answer one question in this section.

1

Either (a) The extract below is from the play, *Miss Julia*, by August Strinberg (1849–1912). The servants, Jean, a thirty-year-old male valet, and Christine, a thirty-five-year-old cook, are discussing their master's twenty-five-year-old daughter, Miss Julia. The action takes place on Midsummer's Eve (the day before the festivity that celebrates the summer solstice) in the kitchen of the count's country house.

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

- Jean* Tonight Miss Julia is crazy again; absolutely crazy.
- Christine* So you're back again?
- Jean* I took the count to the station, and when I came back by the barn, I went in and had a dance, and there I saw the young lady leading the dance with the gamekeeper. But when she caught sight of me, she rushed right up to me and asked me to dance the ladies' waltz with her. And ever since she's been waltzing like – well, I never saw the like of it. She's crazy! 5
- Christine* And has always been, but never the way it's been this last fortnight, since her engagement was broken.
- Jean* Well, what kind of a story was that anyhow? He's a fine fellow, isn't he, although he isn't rich? Ugh, but they're so full of notions. [*Sits down at the end of the table.*] It's peculiar anyhow, that a young lady – hm! – would rather stay at home with the servants – don't you think? – than go with her father to their relatives! 10
- Christine* Oh, I guess she feels sort of embarrassed by that rumpus with her fellow. 15
- Jean* Quite likely. But there was some backbone to that man just the same. Do you know how it happened, Christine? I saw it, although I didn't care to let on.
- Christine* No, did you?
- Jean* Sure, I did. They were in the stable-yard one evening, and the young lady was training him as she called it. Do you know what that meant? She made him leap over her horse-whip the way you teach a dog to jump. Twice he jumped and got a cut each time. The third time he took the whip out of her hand and broke it into a thousand bits. And then he got out. 20
- Christine* So that's the way it happened! You don't say!
- Jean* Yes, that how that thing happened. Well, Christine, what have you got that's tasty? 25
- Christine* [*serves from the pan and puts the plate before JEAN.*] Oh, just some kidney which I cut out of the veal roast.
- Jean* [*smelling the food.*] Fine! That's my great *délice*.¹ [*Feeling the plate.*] But you might have warmed the plate. 30
- Christine* Well, if you ain't harder to please than the count himself! [*Pulls his hair playfully.*]

Jean *[irritated]*. Don't pull my hair! You know how sensitive I am.

Christine Well, well, it was nothing but a love pull, you know.

[JEAN eats. CHRISTINE opens a bottle of beer.] 35

Jean Beer – on Midsummer Eve? No, thank you! Then I have something better myself. *[Opens a table-drawer and takes out a bottle of claret with yellow cap.]* Yellow seal, mind you! Give me a glass – and you use those with stems when you drink it *pure*.

Christine *[Returns to the stove and puts a small pan on the fire]*. Heaven preserve her that gets you for a husband, Mr. Finicky! 40

Jean Oh, rot! You'd be glad enough to get a smart fellow like me. And I guess it hasn't hurt you that they call me your beau. *[Tasting the wine.]* Good! Pretty good! Just a tiny bit too cold. *[He warms the glass with his hands.]* We got this at Dijon. It cost us four francs per litre, not counting the bottle. And there was the duty besides. What is it you're cooking – with that infernal smell? 45

Christine Oh, it's some deviltry the young lady is going to give Diana.

Jean You should choose your words with more care, Christine. But why should you be cooking for a bitch on a holiday eve like this? Is she sick?

Christine Ye-es, she is sick. She's been running around with the gatekeeper's pug – and now's there's trouble – and the young lady won't hear of it. 50

Jean The young lady is too stuck up in some ways and not proud enough in others – just as was the countess while she lived. She was most at home in the kitchen and among the cows, but she would never drive with only one horse. She wore her cuffs till they were dirty, but she had to have cuff buttons with a coronet on them. And speaking of the young lady, she doesn't take proper care of herself and her person. I might say even that she's lacking in refinement. Just now, when she was dancing in the barn, she pulled the gamekeeper away from Anna and asked him herself to come and dance with her. We wouldn't act in that way. But that's just how it is: when upper-class people want to demean themselves, then they grow – mean! But she's splendid! Magnificent! Oh, such shoulders! And – and so on! 55

Christine Oh, well, don't brag too much! I've heard Clara talking, who tends to her dressing.

Jean Pooh, Clara! You're always jealous of each other. I, who have been out riding with her – And then the way she dances! 65

Christine Say, Jean, won't you dance with me when I'm done?

Jean Of course I will.

Christine Do you promise?

Jean Promise? When I say so, I'll do it. Well, here's thanks for the good food. It tasted fine! *[Puts the cork back into the bottle.]* 70

Or (b) The following is a short story, *The Incident*, by Chinese writer Lu Xun (1881 – 1936). It is about a rickshaw puller's collision with a pedestrian.

Write a critical commentary, discussing ways in which the story explores the theme of the individual and society in literature.

Six years have gone by, as so many winks, since I came to the capital from the village. During all that time there have occurred many of those events known as "affairs of the state", a great number of which I have seen or heard about. My heart does not seem to have been in the least affected by any of them, and recollection now only tends to increase my ill temper and cause me to like people less as the day wears on. But one little incident alone is deep with meaning to me, and I am unable to forget it even now. 5

It was a winter day in the sixth year of the Republic (1917), and a strong northerly wind blew furiously. To make a living, I had to be up early, and on the way to my duties I encountered scarcely anyone. After much difficulty, I finally succeeded in hiring a rickshaw. I told the puller to take me to the South Gate. 10

After a while, the wind moderated its fury, and in its wake the streets were left clean of the loose dust. The puller ran quickly. Just as we approached the South Gate, somebody ran in front of us, got entangled in the rickshaw, and tumbled to the ground. 15

It was a woman with streaks of white in her hair, and she wore ragged clothes. She had darted suddenly from the side of the street, and directly crossed in front of us. My puller tried to swerve aside, but her tattered jacket, unbuttoned and fluttering in the wind, caught in the shafts. Fortunately, the puller had slowed his pace, otherwise she would have been thrown head over heels, and probably injured. After we halted, the woman still knelt on all fours. I did not think she was hurt. No one else had seen the collision. And it irritated me that the puller had stopped and was apparently prepared to get himself involved in some foolish complication. It might delay and trouble my journey. 20

"It's nothing," I told him. "Move on!" 25

But either he did not hear me or did not care, for he put down the shafts and gently helped the old woman to her feet. He held her arms, supporting her, and asked:

"Are you alright?"

"I am hurt."

I thought, "I saw you fall and it was not all rough. How can you be hurt? You are pretending. The whole business is distasteful, and the rickshaw man is merely making difficulties for himself. Now let him find his own way out of the mess." 30

But the puller did not hesitate for a moment after the old woman said she was injured. Still holding her arm, he walked carefully ahead with her. Then I was surprised as, looking ahead, I suddenly noticed a police station, and saw that he was taking her there. No one was outside, so he guided her in through the gate. 35

As they passed in, I experienced a curious sensation. I do not know why, but at the moment, it suddenly seemed to me that his dust-covered figure loomed enormous, and as he walked farther he continued to grow, until finally I had to lift my head to follow him. At the same time, I felt a bodily pressure all over me, which came from his direction. It seemed almost to push out from me all the littleness that hid under my fur-lined gown. I grew weak, as though my vitality had been spent, as though the blood had frozen in me. I sat motionless, stunned and thoughtless, until I saw an officer emerge from the station. Then, I got off from the rickshaw as he approached me. 40 45

“Get another rickshaw,” he advised. “This man can’t pull you anymore.”

Without thinking, I thrust my hand into my pocket and pulled forth a big fistful of coppers. “Give the fellow these,” I said.

The wind had ceased entirely, but the street was still quiet. I mused as I walked, but I was almost afraid to think about myself. Leaving aside what had happened before, I sought an explanation for a fistful of coppers. Why had I given them? As a reward? And did I think of myself, after my conduct, fit to pass judgment upon the rickshaw puller? I could not answer my own conscience. 50

Till now that experience burns in my memory. I think of it, and introspect with pain and effort. The political and military drama of these years is to me like the classics I read in childhood: I cannot recite half a line of it. But always before my eyes, purging me with shame, impelling me to better myself, invigorating my hope and courage, this little incident is reenacted. I see it in every detail as distinctly as on the day it happened. 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) “Disobedience is the true foundation of liberty.”

Compare the ways in which two texts you have studied present disobedience and what it demonstrates about the individual and society.

Or b) Compare the ways in which the two writers you have studied use stereotypes to show the relationship between the individual and 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.**

Philip Larkin: *Collected Poems*

3

- Either (a)** Discuss how authority is presented in Larkin's poems and how it shapes the individual's response to society. You should refer to at least **two** poems from your selection.
- Or (b)** Discuss how Larkin uses paradoxical language to examine the individual's relationship with society. You should refer to at least **two** poems from your selection.

Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

4

- Either (a)** "A *Streetcar Named Desire* deals consistently with a serious theme – self-pity, the persistence of memory that holds people in its grip and will not let them get on with their lives."

With reference to the above quote, discuss the presentation of self-pity in the play, and what it demonstrates about the individual in society.

- Or (b)** Discuss the significance of the past in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and its relation to the individual and society.

William Shakespeare: *Othello*

5

- Either (a)** "Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial." (Act 2, Scene 3)

With reference to the above quote, discuss the dramatic importance of reputation in *Othello*, and how it explores the individual's relationship with society.

- Or (b)** Discuss the portrayal of relationships in *Othello* and what it demonstrates about the individual and society.

End of Paper