

RAFFLES INSTITUTION
2016 YEAR 6 PRELIMINARY EXAM

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9748/02

Paper 2 Victorian Literature (1830–1899)

Wednesday 21 September 2016
0815–1115
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 index number, CT group 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.

At the end of the examination tie your answer sheets to each section securely.

Hand in your 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)** Write a critical commentary of the following passage, an extract from *New Grub Street* (1891) by George Gissing, paying attention in particular to its presentations of key concerns in Victorian society.

Mr Polo used to say that he never knew a man who could work so many consecutive hours as Alfred Yule. A faithful account of all that the young man learnt and wrote from 1855 to 1860—that is, from his twenty-fifth to his thirtieth year—would have the look of burlesque exaggeration. He had set it before him to become a celebrated man, and he was not unaware that the attainment of that end would cost him quite exceptional labour, seeing that nature had not favoured him with brilliant parts. No matter; his name should be spoken among men—unless he killed himself in the struggle for success. 5

In the meantime he married. Living in a garret¹, and supplying himself with the materials of his scanty meals, he was in the habit of making purchases at a little chandler's shop², where he was waited upon by a young girl of no beauty, but, as it seemed to him, of amiable disposition. One holiday he met this girl as she was walking with a younger sister in the streets; he made her nearer acquaintance, and before long she consented to be his wife and share his garret. His brothers, John and Edmund, cried out that he had made an unpardonable fool of himself in marrying so much beneath him; that he might well have waited until his income improved. This was all very well, but they might just as reasonably have bidden him reject plain food because a few years hence he would be able to purchase luxuries; he could not do without nourishment of some sort, and the time had come when he could not do without a wife. Many a man with brains but no money has been compelled to the same step. Educated girls have a pronounced distaste for London garrets; not one in fifty thousand would share poverty with the brightest genius ever born. Seeing that marriage is so often indispensable to that very success which would enable a man of parts to mate equally, there is nothing for it but to look below one's own level, and be grateful to the untaught woman who has pity on one's loneliness. 10 15 20 25

Unfortunately, Alfred Yule was not so grateful as he might have been. His marriage proved far from unsuccessful; he might have found himself united to a vulgar shrew, whereas the girl had the great virtues of humility and kindness. She endeavoured to learn of him, but her dulness and his impatience made this attempt a failure; her human qualities had to suffice. And they did, until Yule began to lift his head above the literary mob. Previously, he often lost his temper with her, but never expressed or felt repentance of his marriage; now he began to see only the disadvantages of his position, and, forgetting the facts of the case, to imagine that he might well have waited for a wife who could share his intellectual existence. Mrs Yule had to pass through a few years of much bitterness. Already a martyr to dyspepsia³, and often suffering from bilious headaches of extreme violence, her husband now and then lost all control of his temper, all sense of kind feeling, even of decency, and reproached the poor woman with her ignorance, her stupidity, her low origin. Naturally enough she defended herself with such weapons as a sense of cruel injustice supplied. More than once the two all but parted. It did not come to an actual rupture, chiefly because Yule could not do without his wife; her tendance⁴ had become indispensable. And then there was the child to consider. 30 35 40

¹ *garret*: A small room at the top of a house that can be rented cheaply.

² *chandler*: a dealer in household items such as oil, soap, paint, and groceries.

³ *dyspepsia*: indigestion

⁴ *tendance*: i.e. attendance. care, attention.

From the first it was Yule's dread lest Marian should be infected with her mother's faults of speech and behaviour. He would scarcely permit his wife to talk to the child. 45
 At the earliest possible moment Marian was sent to a day-school, and in her tenth year she went as weekly boarder to an establishment at Fulham; any sacrifice of money to insure her growing up with the tongue and manners of a lady. It can scarcely have been a light trial to the mother to know that contact with her was regarded as her child's greatest danger; but in her humility and her love for Marian she offered no 50
 resistance. And so it came to pass that one day the little girl, hearing her mother make some flagrant grammatical error, turned to the other parent and asked gravely: 'Why doesn't mother speak as properly as we do?' Well, that is one of the results of such marriages, one of the myriad miseries that result from poverty.
 The end was gained at all hazards. Marian grew up everything that her father desired. 55
 Not only had she the bearing of refinement, but it early became obvious that nature had well endowed her with brains. From the nursery her talk was of books, and at the age of twelve she was already able to give her father some assistance as an amanuensis⁵.

⁵ *amanuensis*: a literary or artistic assistant, in particular one who takes dictation or copies manuscripts.

- Or (b) Write a critical commentary of the following poem, 'England' (1832), by John Henry Newman, paying attention in particular to the ways in which it deals with key concerns in Victorian England.

England

Tyre¹ of the West, and glorying in the name
More than in Faith's pure fame!
O trust not crafty fort nor rock renown'd
Earn'd upon hostile ground;
Wielding Trade's master-keys, at thy proud will 5
To lock or loose its waters, England! trust not still.

Dread thine own power! Since haughty Babel's² prime,
High towers have been man's crime.
Since her hoar³ age, when the huge moat lay bare,
Strongholds have been man's snare. 10
Thy nest is in the crags; ah, refuge frail!
Mad counsel in its hour, or traitors, will prevail.

He who scann'd Sodom⁴ for His righteous men
Still spares thee for thy ten;
But, should vain tongues the Bride of Heaven⁵ defy, 15
He will not pass thee by;
For, as earth's kings welcome their spotless guest,
So gives He them by turn, to suffer or be blest.

¹ *Tyre*: A wealthy island city, mentioned several times in the Bible, renowned for its maritime trade.

² *Babel*: The people of the earth gathered together and sought to build a tower that would reach Heaven. For their arrogance, God struck down the tower, caused all people to speak in different languages, and scattered them over the earth.

³ *hoar* i.e. hoary, ancient, venerable

⁴ *Sodom*: When God intended to destroy the city of Sodom for its grievous sin, Abraham pleaded for Sodom by asking God to spare the city if ten righteous men could be found living within it.

⁵ *Bride of Heaven* i.e. the Church

Section B

**Answer one question in this section, using two texts that you have studied.
The texts used in this question cannot be used in Section C.**

2

- Either (a)** Compare the ways in which **two** Victorian writers make use of or explore the importance of beginnings and endings.
- Or (b)** Compare the presentation of action and intention in **two** Victorian texts you have studied.

Section C

Answer one question in this section, using one text that you have studied.
The text used in this question cannot be used in Section B.

GEORGE ELIOT: *Silas Marner*

3

Either (a) Discuss Eliot's portrayal of parents and parenthood in *Silas Marner*.

Or (b) "I'll trusten till I die."

Comment on the presentation of faith in *Silas Marner*.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË: *Jane Eyre*

4

Either (a) "... though rank and wealth sever us widely, I have something in my brain and heart, in my blood and nerves, that assimilates me mentally to him."

Comment on the presentation of marriage and love in *Jane Eyre*.

Or (b) "A Bildungsroman is the story of a single individual's growth and development within the context of a defined social order."

Discuss the narrative development of *Jane Eyre* in light of this comment.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW: *Mrs Warren's Profession*

5

Either (a) "You think that people are what they pretend to be ..."

Comment on the ways in which *Mrs Warren's Profession* portrays the relationship between public and private selves.

Or (b) How far do you agree that "in *Mrs Warren's Profession*, society, and not any individual, is ultimately the greatest villain"?

OSCAR WILDE: *Lady Windermere's Fan*

6

Either (a) Discuss the role and significance of the male and female chorus in *Lady Windermere's Fan*.

Or (b) "The play challenges audiences and seeks to propel them towards reform."

Discuss the validity of this statement in relation to Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*.

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