



**NANYANG JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
2016**

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9748/03

Paper 3 The Individual and Society in Literature

Thursday, 22nd Sep 2016

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 *Chair* (first performed in 2000), by Edward Bond. In the scene below, the Welfare Officer is interviewing Alice. Previously, Alice had seen a soldier guarding a female prisoner for a long time from her flat. She brought a chair down for the soldier to rest. The prisoner grabbed the chair and was beaten by the soldier. Alice tried to intervene and was bitten by the prisoner. The soldier eventually shoots the prisoner when she attempted to follow Alice, who was returning to her flat.

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

- OFFICER: Criminals are public enemies. They cannot be tolerated. You would agree if you knew the harm and suffering they cause. Pity for them is an insult to the law. It is a conspiracy with the criminal to aid and abet the crime. You see what I am suggesting. You took the chair down to the prisoner out of pity. 5
- Silence. The Officer opens her case. She takes out a photograph in a transparent cover. It is tagged with a blue strip. She holds it out to Alice.*
- The examinee is shown exhibit 15. Please hold this photograph in your hand. [*Alice takes the photograph.*] Taken in the morgue – where often even the weariest features compose themselves into an expression of peace. Here not. You see the fatigue. Haggard even. Please hold it steadily so that you may see clearly. Notice the dry blood on her beard. (*Use pencil as pointer.*) What you see there are chips of teeth adhering to the surface – perhaps embedded over time. [*She takes a magnifying glass out of her case.*] This will give you the benefit of forensic exactness. 10
- [*Alice takes the glass. Looks through it at the photograph.*] From the second storey the details might not be noticed. Close to – the position in which you put yourself – they would. What you saw changed your mind. You took the chair down for the soldier. You gave it to the prisoner. 15
- ALICE: No. 20
- [*The Officer takes a small transparent packet out of her case. It is tagged with a yellow strip. She holds it out to Alice.*]
- OFFICER: The examinee is shown exhibit 49. The pathologist removed these hairs from the old woman's nails.
- ALICE: What did she do? 25
- OFFICER: The hair is from your head.
- ALICE: What did she do?
- OFFICER: You are entitled to ask for a DNA confirmation. The department has a policy of avoiding expense in minor inquiries.
- ALICE: I didn't know her! I couldn't know anyone in that state if I'd lived with them for the whole of my life! Take your photograph off my table where I eat! 30
- OFFICER: The examinee shows signs of excitability. Your cheek is scarred. That is where the prisoner bit you.
- ALICE: Bit! - she tried to kiss me.
- OFFICER: Why? – if you were two unknowns. 35
- ALICE: How long had the soldiers had her? Did they - what did they - They gave you a picture of it!

OFFICER: If she had been in her right mind she would not have disputed the army's duty to question her. She cooperated as best as she could. Accepted sentence. Her conduct was exemplary till she saw you and became violently agitated – 40

ALICE: What did they do to her hand?

OFFICER: You tell me why an old woman – physically stretched under questioning – who frittered away the last chances offered her – enroute to the PrisCit Blocks which she certainly knew to be her last journey – would kiss a stranger of whom she knew nothing except that she owned a chair? 45

ALICE: What did she do?

OFFICER: If you have no explanation, I shall remand you in custody for further questioning. This place will be closed and sealed. I have soldiers waiting downstairs. 50

[*Silence.*]

ALICE: [*fla*] I brought the chair for the solider. She thought it was meant for her.

OFFICER: She saw pity in you. That's why she kissed you.

ALICE: She bit me.

OFFICER: ... I don't see how you can say that if you maintain... 55

ALICE: She'd forgotten what pity was. She wasn't used to it. I was the only person who didn't hit her. She took that for a sign of kindness. It was the kindness that frightened her. She bit me.

Or

- (b) The following passage is the opening chapter from Meera Syal's novel, *Anita and Me* (published in 1996). The narrator, a second-generation Punjabi girl living in Britain with her immigrant parents, is reflecting upon her early childhood.

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

I do not have any memories of my very early childhood, apart from the obvious ones, of course. You know, my windswept, bewildered parents in their dusty Indian village garb standing in the open doorway of a 747¹, blinking back tears of gratitude and heartbreak as the fog cleared to reveal the sign they had been waiting for, dreaming of, the sign planted in tarmac and emblazoned in triumphant hues of red, blue and white, the sign that said simply, WELCOME TO BRITAIN. 5

And then there's the early years of struggle and disillusion, living in a shabby boarding house room with another newly arrived immigrant family, Polish, I think would be quite romantic; my father arriving back from his sweatshop at dawn to take his place in the bed vacated by Havel who would be off to do his shift on the McDouglas Biscuits assembly line, my father sweeping away crushed garibaldi² crumbs from the communal pillow before sliding gratefully into oblivious sleep, my mother awake at his side, counting the kicks from the daughter inside her who would condemn her, marry her to England forever. 15

I slept in a drawer, probably, swaddled in back copies of the *Daily Mirror*. My mother only found out about Kennedy's assassination two weeks after the event, when she read the reversed newsprint headlined on my damp backside. She didn't follow the news, no telly, no radio, no inclination, being a simple Punjabi girl suffering from culture shock, marooned and misplaced in Wolverhampton. 20

Of course, this is the alternative history I trot out in job interview situations or, once or twice, to impress middle-class white boys who come sniffing round, excited by the thought of wearing a colonial maiden as a trinket on their arm. My earliest memory, in fact, is of the first time I understood the punchline to a joke. I was watching some kind of Royal Variety television show on ice – I remember that because it was a balmy summer evening and I wondered how they had managed to keep the floor so cold. A man in a lime green jumpsuit raised a gun and took aim at a fat female ballerina who was gliding towards him like some vast, magnificent galleon, pink tulle emanating in a cloud from around her strong marbled thighs like ectoplasm³. The man raised the gun, fired once, twice, and the ballerina fell dramatically to the floor to hilarity and applause. 30

¹ 747: The Boeing 747 commercial airplane

² Garibaldi: A common British tea-time biscuit

³ Ectoplasm: The clear outer layer of cytoplasm in amoeboid cells

'Oh my dearie,' said the man. 'I think I shot her in the tutu⁴.'

My mother said I laughed so much that I threw up and at one point, called in Mrs Worrall from next door who put her teeth in and solemnly declared that I'd probably 'had a turn.' But I've always been a sucker for a good double entendre; the gap between what is said and what is thought, what is stated and what is implied, is a place in which I have always found myself. I'm not really a liar, I just learned very early on that those of us deprived of history sometimes need to turn to mythology to feel complete, to belong.

35

40

⁴ Slang for buttocks in French

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) 'The value of the individual is determined by his value to society'.

With this comment in mind, compare the ways in which two texts you have studied present the tension between individual self-worth and social value.

Or (b) Compare how, and to what extent, two texts you have studied depict individuals as social rebels.

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)

'It translated well.' (*A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe*)

To what extent, and with what effects, does Kingston reconcile the tensions between Chinese and American society in *The Woman Warrior*?

Or (b)

In relation to ideas about the individual and society, explore Kingston's presentation of social misfits in *The Woman Warrior*.

BOEY KIM CHENG: *Clear Brightness*

4

Either (a)

How, and with what effects, does Boey Kim Cheng present the idea of home in his exploration of the relationship between the individual and society?

Or (b)

Consider the ways in which Boey presents the speaker as a traveller in foreign societies. You should refer to at least **two** poems from your selection.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

5

Either (a)

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

Or (b)

How, and with what effects upon an audience, does Williams portray love and desire in *A Streetcar Named Desire*?

END OF PAPER