

YISHUN JUNIOR COLLEGE 2017 JC2 ENGLISH LITERATURE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

**LITERATURE IN ENGLISH
HIGHER 2**

9748/03

Paper 3 The Individual and Society in Literature

Monday 11 September 2017

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 **6** printed pages.

SECTION A

Answer one question in this section.

1

Either (a) The following is an extract from the play *Master Harold and the Boys* by white South African playwright Athol Fugard (born 1932).

The setting of the play is 1950 and the action takes place in The St. George's Park Tea Room in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Willie and Sam are black waiters in their mid-forties. Hally is the seventeen year old son of their white restaurant employers. Hally's father is an alcoholic and a cripple.

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

- Sam [Almost shouting.] Stop now!
- Hally [Suddenly appalled by how far he has gone.] Why?
- Sam Hally? It's your father you're talking about.
- Hally So?
- Sam Do you know what you've been saying? [HALLY can't answer. He is rigid with shame. SAM speaks to him sternly.] No, Hally, you mustn't do it. Take back those words and ask for forgiveness! It's a terrible sin for a son to mock his father with jokes like that. You'll be punished if you carry on. Your father is your father, even if he is a . . . cripple man. 5
- Willie Yes, Master Hally. Is true what Sam say. 10
- Sam I understand how you are feeling, Hally, but even so . . .
- Hally No, you don't!
- Sam I think I do.
- Hally And I'm telling you you don't. Nobody does. [Speaking carefully as his shame turns to rage at SAM.] It's your turn to be careful, Sam. Very careful! You're treading on dangerous ground. Leave me and my father alone. 15
- Sam I'm not the one who's been saying things about him.
- Hally What goes on between me and my Dad is none of your business.
- Sam Then don't tell me about it. If that's all you've got to say about him, I don't want to hear. [For a moment HALLY is at a loss for a response.] 20
- Hally Just get on with your bloody work and shut up.
- Sam Swearing at me won't help you.
- Hally Yes, it does! Mind your own fucking business and shut up!
- Sam Okay. If that's the way you want it, I'll stop trying. [He turns away. This infuriates HALLY even more.] 25
- Hally Good. Because what you've been trying to do is meddle in something you know nothing about. All that concerns you here, Sam, is to try and do what you get paid for - keep the place clean and serve the customers. In plain words, just get on with your job. My mother is right. She's always warning me about allowing you to get too familiar. Well, this time you've gone too far. It's going to stop right now. [No response from SAM.] You're only a servant in 30

here, and don't forget it. [*Still no response. HALLY is trying hard to get one.*]
 And as far as my father is concerned, all you need to remember is that he is
 your boss.

Sam [*Needles at last.*] No, he isn't. I get paid by your mother. 35

Hally Don't argue with me, Sam!

Sam Then don't say he's my boss.

Hally He's a white man and that's good enough for you.

Sam I'll try to forget you said that.

Hally Don't! Because you won't be doing me a favor if you do. I'm telling you to 40
 remember it.

[*A pause. SAM pulls himself together and makes one last effort.*]

Sam Hally, Hally . . . ! Come on now. Let's stop before it's too late. You're right. We
 are on dangerous ground! If we're not careful, somebody is going to get hurt.

Hally It won't be me. 45

Sam Don't be so sure.

Hally I don't know what you're talking about, Sam.

Sam Yes, you do.

Hally [*Furious.*] Jesus, I wish you would stop trying to tell me what I do and what I
 don't know. 50

[*SAM gives up. He turns to WILLIE.*]

Sam Let's finish up.

Hally Don't turn your back on me! I haven't finished talking. [*He grabs SAM by the
 arm and tries to make him turn around. SAM reacts with a flash of anger.*]

Sam Don't do that, Hally! [*Facing the boy.*] All right, I'm listening. Well? What do 55
 you want to say to me?

Hally [*Pause as HALLY looks for something to say.*] To begin with, why don't you
 start calling me Master Harold, like Willie.

Sam Do you mean that?

Hally Why the hell do you think I said it? 60

Sam And if I don't . . .

Hally You might just lose your job.

Sam [*Quietly and very carefully.*] If you make me say it once, I'll never call you
 anything else again.

Hally So? [*The boy confronts the man.*] Is that meant to be a threat? 65

Sam Just telling you what will happen if you make me do that. You must decide
 what it means to you.

Hally Well, I have. It's good news. Because that is exactly what Master Harold wants
 from now on. Think of it as a little lesson in respect, Sam, that's long overdue,
 and I hope you remember it as well as you do your geography. I can tell you 70
 now that somebody who will be glad to hear I've finally given it to you will be
 my Dad. Yes! He agrees with my Mom. He's always going on about it as well.
 "You must teach the boys to show you more respect, my son."

- Or (b) Write a critical appreciation on the poem below by Stephen Spender (1909-1995), relating it to the theme of the individual and society in literature.

The Marginal Field

On the chalk cliff edge struggles the final field
 Of barley smutted with tares and marbled
 With veins of rusted poppy as though the plough had bled.
 The sun is drowned in bird-wailing mist
 The sea and sky meet outside distinction 5
 The landscape glares and stares – white poverty
 Of gaslight diffused through frosted glass.

This field was the farmer's extremest thought
 And its flinty heart became his heart
 When he drove below the return it yields 10
 The wage of the labourer sheeted in sweat.
 Here the price and the cost cross on a chart
 At a point fixed on the margin of profit
 Which opens out into the golden fields

Waving their grasses and virile beards 15
 On the laps of the dripping valleys and flushing
 Their pulsing ears against negative skies.
 Their roots clutch into the flesh of the soil,
 As they fall to the scythe they whisper of excess
 Heaped high above the flat wavering scale 20
 Near the sea, beyond the wind-scarred hill

Where loss is exactly equaled by gain
 And the roots and the sinews wrestle with stone
 On the margin of what can just be done
 To eat back from the land the man the land eats. 25
 Starved outpost of wealth and final soldier,
 Your stretched-out bones are the frontier of power
 With your mouth wide open to drink in lead.

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 truth shall set you free."

Compare the ways in which **two** texts you have studied present the pursuit of truth, and what it demonstrates about the individual in society.

Or b) Compare the ways in which the **two** writers you have studied examine the notion of loyalty, and how it relates to the theme of 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)** 'From your unsatisfactory age
To my unsatisfactory prime.' (Reference Back)

Explore Larkin's poetic presentation of the individual's quest for satisfaction in their relationship with society. You should refer to at least **two** poems.

- Or (b)** Discuss how the voices in Larkin's poems can be perceived as subverting social norms, and what this contributes to a wider picture of the individual in society. You should refer to at least **two** poems.

Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

4

- Either (a)** "[*A Streetcar Named Desire*] is a play of naked desperation."

Examine the validity of the above quote and what it demonstrates about the individual in society.

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

William Shakespeare: *Othello*

5

- Either (a)** "The final moments of the play suggest that the women rise up against a brutal world of misogyny."

With reference to the above quote, discuss the presentation of women in *Othello*, and what it reflects about the individual's relationship with society.

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

End of Paper