



DUNMAN HIGH SCHOOL
General Certificate of Education Advanced Level
Higher 2

YEAR 6 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

CANDIDATE
NAME

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9748/03

Paper 3 The Individual and Society in Literature

19 September 2017

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 class, index number 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, fasten all your work securely together.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

Section A

Answer ONE question in this section.

1.

Either [a] The short story, Kwashiorkor¹, written by Can Themba (1924 – 1968), is set in South Africa. The narrator goes on house visits with his sister Eileen and encounters the harsh realities in life.

Write a critical analysis of the passage, relating its theme and style to the topic of the individual and society in literature.

So we went to that house in 3rd Avenue, off Selbourne Road. A deep gully ran in front of the house but the uneven street did not allow it to function effectively as a drain, and puddles of murky, noisome water collected waste-matter stood pooled in it, still, thick, appalling, like foul soup that makes you nauseous – as if some malevolent devil bade you gulp it down. On the other side the rotting carcass of a long-dead dog was sending malodorous miasmata² from its surface to befoul the air. And on either side of the street, moated by these stinking gullies, lived people. 5

Eileen jumped smartly over the trench and I followed. We walked into the fenceless yard, round to the back of the house, and she knocked. After a moment a wrinkled old lady opened the door. The plough-shares of the years had wobbled across her face; but then again, you thought it could not have been the years alone that had ravaged her so; something else... 10

'Oh, come in, nurse.' They called everybody 'nurse' who came to their hovels to promise assuagement of their misery.

Although it was bright day outside, you had to get used to the dark inside, and then when your eyes, by slow degrees, adjusted themselves, things seemed to come at you. A big sideboard tilted into view first. Then a huge stove with one grey arm reached into the ceiling hole obscenely, and near it a double-bed, perched on four large polish tins filled with sand. The bed was sunken in the middle like a crude canoe, and the blankets on it were yellow with age and threadbare with wear. In the middle of the top blanket was a great hole from some past misadventure, and through the hole glowered a crimson eye, the red disc of a piece-patched quilt-like thing. 15

I stumbled into a wooden table in the centre, and in my retreat hit a kitchen-dresser. Dark brown cockroaches scrambled for cover. 20

'Don't be so clumsy,' Eileen hissed, and in the same syntax, as it were, to the old lady, 'Mother Mabiletsa, it's so dark in here. You really must open that window.'

I had not known there was a window there, but Eileen swept a piece of blanket aside and in flushed the light of day. 25

'How are you, Mother Mabiletsa? How are the legs today? Sit down please and tell me how is the baby?'

Mother Mabiletsa groaned into a chair, and I took a bench by the side of the table. Eileen stood a moment holding the woman in scrutiny. When the old woman did not reply, Eileen lifted her bag and put it on the table. 30

'Look, I've brought little Sekgametse some skimmed milk. It's very good for babies, you know.'

I turned to look at the old lady and it seemed to me she was past caring about Grace or Damnation. She was just enveloped in a dreadful murk or weariness.

She pressed down on arthritic knees, rose painfully and limped into another room. I could hear her moving about, heaving with effort though she sounded alone. Then she came in with a bundle in her arms which she put down on the great bed beside Eileen. 35

'Come and look,' Eileen whispered to me as she unfurled the bundle.

There sat a little monkey on the bed. It was a two to three years' old child. The child did not cry or fidget, but bore an unutterably miserable expression on its face, in its whole bearing. It was as if she was the grandmother writ small; pathetically, wretchedly she looked out upon the world. 40

'Is it in pain?' I asked in an anxious whisper.

'No, just wasting away.'

'But she looks quite fat.'

To be sure, she did. But it was a ghastly kind of fatness, the fatness of the 'hidden hunger' I was to know. The belly was distended and sagged towards the bed, the legs looked bent convexly 45

and there were light-brown patches on them, and on the chest and back. The complexion of the kid was unnaturally light here and there so that the creature looked piebald. The normally curly hair had a rusty tint and had lost much of its whorl. Much of it had fallen out, leaving islets of skull surfacing.

The child looked aside towards me, and the silent reproach, the quiet, listless abject despair flowed from the large eyes wave upon wave. Not a peep, not a murmur. The child made no sound of complaint except the struggling breathing. 50

But those haunted eyes of despair. Despair? I brooded. To despair, you should have had knowledge before. You should have gone through the tart sensations of experience, have felt the first flush of knowledge, the first stabs of hope, have encountered reality and toyed with the shifting, tantalizing promises that shadow-play across life's tapestries, have stretched out, first tentative arms, then wildly grasping hands, and have discovered the disappointment of the evanescence of all things that come from the voids to tickle men's fancies, sharpen men's appetites and rouse their futile aspirations, only to vanish back into the voids. Ultimately you should have looked into the face of death and known the paralyzing power of fear. 55

What of all this, could this little monkey know? And, yet, there it all was in those tragic eyes. 60

¹kwashiorkor: Disease afflicting children who suffer from malnutrition.

²miasmata: Noxious vapours from decomposing organic matter.

- Or [b] The extract below was taken from Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* [1959]. The play deals with the experiences of a black family as they live in poverty in a dilapidated two-bedroom apartment which they share with another family on Chicago's south side.

Write a critical appreciation of the extract, discussing ways in which it explores the theme of the individual and society in literature.

- Walter: [*Not listening at all or even looking at her*] This morning, I was lookin' in the mirror and thinking about it ... I'm thirty-five years old; I been married eleven years and I got a boy who sleeps in the living room [*Very, very quietly*] and all I got to give him is stories about how rich white people live . . .
- Ruth: Eat your eggs, Walter. 5
- Walter: [*Slams the table and jumps up*] DAMN MY EGGS DAMN ALL THE EGGS THAT EVER WAS!
- Ruth: Then go to work.
- Walter: [*Looking up at her*] See I'm trying to talk to you 'bout myself [*Shaking his head with the repetition*] and all you can say is eat them eggs and go to work. 10
- Ruth: [*Wearily*] Honey, you never say nothing new. I listen to you every day, every night and every morning, and you never say nothing new. [*Shrugging*] So you would rather be Mr. Arnold than be his chauffeur. So I would rather be living in Buckingham Palace.
- Walter: That is just what is wrong with the colored woman in this world . . . Don't understand about building their men up and making 'em feel like they somebody. Like they can do something. 15
- Ruth: [*Drily, but to hurt*] There are colored men who do things.
- Walter: No thanks to the colored woman.
- Ruth: Well, being a colored woman, I guess I can't help myself none. [*She rises and gets the ironing board and sets it up and attacks a huge pile of rough-dried clothes, sprinkling them in preparation for the ironing and then rolling them into tight fat balls.*] 20
- Walter: [*Mumbling*] We one group of men tied to a race of women with small minds!
- [*His sister BENEATHA enters. She is about twenty, as slim and intense as her brother. She is not as pretty as her sister-in-law, but her lean, almost intellectual face has a handsomeness of its own. She wears a bright-red flannel nightie, and her thick hair stands wildly about her head. Her speech is a mixture of many things; it is different from the rest of the family's insofar as education has permeated her sense of English and perhaps the Midwest rather than the South has finally at last won out in her inflection; but not altogether, because over all of it is a soft slurring and transformed use of vowels which is the decided influence of the Southside. She passes through the room without looking at either RUTH or WALTER and goes to the outside door and looks, a little blindly, out to the bathroom. She sees that it has been lost to the Johnsons. She closes the door with a sleepy vengeance and crosses to the table and sits down a little defeated.*] 25 30 35
- Beneatha: I am going to start timing those people.
- Walter: You should get up earlier.
- Beneatha: [*Her face in her hands. She is still fighting the urge to go back to bed*] Really would you suggest dawn? Where's the paper? 40
- Walter: [*Pushing the paper across the table to her as he studies her almost clinically, as though he has never seen her before*] You a horrible-looking chick at this hour.
- Beneatha: [*Drily*] Good morning, everybody.
- Walter: [*Senselessly*] How is school coming?
- Beneatha: [*In the same spirit*] Lovely. Lovely. And you know, biology is the greatest. [*Looking up at him*] I dissected something that looked just like you yesterday. 45
- Walter: I just wondered if you've made up your mind and everything.

Beneatha: [*Gaining in sharpness and impatience*] And what did I answer yesterday morning and the day before that?

Ruth: [*From the ironing board, like someone disinterested and old*] Don't be so nasty, Bennie. 50

Beneatha: [*Still to her brother*] And the day before that and the day before that!

Walter: [*Defensively*] I'm interested in you. Something wrong with that? Ain't many girls who decide

WALTER and BENEATHA [*In unison*] 55

Be & Wal: "to be a doctor."

[*Silence*]

Walter: Have we figured out yet just exactly how much medical school is going to cost?

Ruth: Walter Lee, why don't you leave that girl alone and get out of here to work?

Beneatha: [*Exits to the bathroom and bangs on the door*] Come on out of there, please! 60

[*She comes back into the room*]

Walter: [*Looking at his sister intently*] You know the check is coming tomorrow.

Beneatha: [*Turning on him with a sharpness all her own*] That money belongs to Mama, Walter, and it's for her to decide how she wants to use it. I don't care if she wants to buy a house or a rocket ship or just nail it up somewhere and look at it. It's hers. 65

Not ours – hers.

Walter: [*Bitterly*] Now ain't that fine! You just got your mother's interest at heart, ain't you, girl? You such a nice girl but if Mama got that money she can always take a few thousand and help you through school too – can't she?

Beneatha: I have never asked anyone around here to do anything for me! 70

Walter: No! And the line between asking and just accepting when the time comes is big and wide ain't it!

Beneatha: [*With fury*] What do you want from me, Brother that I quit school or just drop dead, which!

Walter: I don't want nothing but for you to stop acting holy 'round here. Me and Ruth done made some sacrifices for you – why can't you do something for the family? 75

Ruth: Walter, don't be dragging me in it.

Walter: You are in it! Don't you get up and go work in somebody's kitchen for the last three years to help put clothes on her back?

Ruth: Oh, Walter that's not fair . . . 80

Walter: It ain't that nobody expects you to get on your knees and say thank you, Brother; thank you, Ruth; thank you, Mama and thank you, Travis, for wearing the same pair of shoes for two semesters –

Beneatha: [*Dropping to her knees*] Well – I do – all right? – thank everybody! And forgive me for ever wanting to be anything at all! [*Pursuing him on her knees across the floor*] FORGIVE ME, FORGIVE ME, FORGIVE ME! 85

Section B

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

2.

Either [a] “The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.”

Critically comment on this statement, drawing comparisons from any **two** texts you have studied.

Or [b] “In society, we learn that we are all of us alone.”

With reference to any **two** texts you have studied, compare and contrast the ways in which this statement is presented.

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Section C

Answer one question in this section, using one text 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." [*Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe*]

In the light of the quote, discuss how and through what means, Kingston presents the complications of translation.

Or [b] Critically examine the treatment of Kingston's identity crisis and relate it to the study of the individual and society.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

4

Either [a] Discuss the dramatic significance of setting in the world of the play.

Or [b] 'All the characters are guilty.'

Discuss the ways in which Williams presents the characters in the play, relating your answers to the topic of the individual and society.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

5

Either [a] 'Every individual in *Othello* participates in a multiplicity of social identities.' Discuss.

Or [b] 'There are no heroes in *Othello*.'

How far do you agree with this view of the play in relation to ideas about the individual and society?

Copyright Acknowledgement:

Question 1a © Can Themba; *The Will to Die*, Heinemann Educational Books, 1972.
Question 1b © Lorraine Hansberry; *A Raisin in the Sun*, Methuen Drama, 2001.