



Baccalaureate Examination

ENGLISH LANGUAGE 1

DATE: _____ **2019**

LENGTH OF EXAMINATION: 4 HOURS

PERMITTED EQUIPMENT: None

SPECIAL REMARKS: **Answer ALL THREE questions.**
There is a choice of questions in Question 3.

Each of your answers will be marked equally for content (i.e. the knowledge and understanding you show of texts) and expression (i.e. the ambition shown in your use of language and the accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar).

Question 1 – 30%

Write a critical commentary on the following two poems, comparing and contrasting them with regard to content and style.

The Black Lace Fan my Mother Gave me

It was the first gift he ever gave her,
buying it for five francs in the galleries
in pre-war Paris. It was stifling.
A starless drought made the nights stormy.

They stayed in the city for summer.
They met in cafés. She was always early.
He was late. That evening he was later.
They wrapped the fan. He looked at his watch.

She looked down the Boulevard des Capucines.
She ordered more coffee. She stood up.
The streets were emptying. The heat was killing.
She thought the distance smelled of rain and lightning.

These are wild roses, appliquéed on silk by hand,
darkly picked, stitched boldly, quickly.
The rest is tortoiseshell and has the reticent,
clear patience of its element. It is

a worn-out, underwater bullion and it keeps,
even now, an inference of its violation.
The lace is overcast as if the weather
it opened for and offset had entered it.

The past is an empty café terrace.

An airless dusk before thunder. A man running.

And no way now to know what happened then –

none at all – unless of course, you improvise:

The blackbird on this first sultry morning,

in summer, finding buds, worms, fruit,

feels the heat. Suddenly she puts out her wing –

the whole, full, flirtatious span of it.

Eavan Boland (b.1944)

I Go Back To May 1937

I see them standing at the formal gates of their colleges,

I see my father strolling out

under the ochre sandstone arch, the

red tiles glinting like bent

plates of blood behind his head, I

see my mother with a few light books at her hip

standing at the pillar made of tiny bricks with the

wrought-iron gate still open behind her, its

sword-tips black in the May air,

they are about to graduate, they are about to get married,

they are kids, they are dumb, all they know is they are

innocent, they would never hurt anybody.

I want to go up to them and say Stop,

don't do it – she's the wrong woman,

he's the wrong man, you are going to do things

you cannot imagine you would ever do,

you are going to do bad things to children,

you are going to suffer in ways you never heard of,

you are going to want to die. I want to go

up to them there in the late May sunlight and say it,

her hungry pretty blank face turning to me,

her pitiful beautiful untouched body,

his arrogant handsome blind face turning to me,

his pitiful beautiful untouched body,

but I don't do it. I want to live. I

take them up like the male and female

paper dolls and bang them together

at the hips like chips of flint as if to

strike sparks from them, I say

Do what you are going to do, and I will tell about it

Sharon Olds (b. 1942)

Question 2 – 30%

Write a critical commentary on the following non-literary text, a speech advising a response to current political trends. Evaluate the writer's success, and the methods he uses, in conveying his ideas and persuading the reader to his point of view.

There is a global struggle taking place of enormous consequence. Nothing less than the future of the planet – economically, socially and environmentally – is at stake.

At a time of massive wealth and income inequality, when the world's top 1% now owns more wealth than the bottom 99%, we are seeing the rise of a new authoritarian axis.

While these regimes may differ in some respects, they share key attributes: hostility toward democratic norms, antagonism toward a free press, intolerance toward ethnic and religious minorities, and a belief that government should benefit their own selfish financial interests. These leaders are also deeply connected to a network of multi-billionaire oligarchs who see the world as their economic plaything.

Those of us who believe in democracy, who believe that a government must be accountable to its people, must understand the scope of this challenge if we are to effectively confront it.

It should be clear by now that Donald Trump and the right-wing movement that supports him is not a phenomenon unique to the United States. All around the world, in Europe, in Russia, in the Middle East, in Asia and elsewhere we are seeing movements led by demagogues who exploit people's fears, prejudices and grievances to achieve and hold on to power.

This trend certainly did not begin with Trump, but there's no question that authoritarian leaders around the world have drawn inspiration from the fact that the leader of the world's oldest and most powerful democracy seems to delight in shattering democratic norms.

Three years ago, who would have imagined that the United States would stay neutral between Canada, our democratic neighbor and second largest trading partner, and Saudi Arabia, a monarchic, client state that treats women as third-class citizens? It's also hard to imagine that Israel's Netanyahu government would have moved to pass the recent "nation state law", which essentially codifies the second-class status of

Israel's non-Jewish citizens, if Benjamin Netanyahu didn't know Trump would have his back.

All of this is not exactly a secret. As the US continues to grow further and further apart from our long time democratic allies, the US ambassador to Germany recently made clear the Trump administration's support for right-wing extremist parties across Europe.

In addition to Trump's hostility toward democratic institutions we have a billionaire president who, in an unprecedented way, has blatantly embedded his own economic interests and those of his cronies into the policies of government.

Other authoritarian states are much farther along this kleptocratic process. In Russia, it is impossible to tell where the decisions of government end and the interests of Vladimir Putin and his circle of oligarchs begin. They operate as one unit. Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, there is no debate about separation because the natural resources of the state, valued at trillions of dollars, belong to the Saudi royal family. In Hungary, far-right authoritarian leader Viktor Orbán is openly allied with Putin in Russia. In China, an inner circle led by Xi Jinping has steadily consolidated power, clamping down on domestic political freedom while it aggressively promotes a version of authoritarian capitalism abroad.

We must understand that these authoritarians are part of a common front. They are in close contact with each other, share tactics and, as in the case of European and American right-wing movements, even share some of the same funders. The Mercer family, for example, supporters of the infamous Cambridge Analytica, have been key backers of Trump and of Breitbart News, which operates in Europe, the United States and Israel to advance the same anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim agenda. Republican mega donor Sheldon Adelson gives generously to right-wing causes in both the United States and Israel, promoting a shared agenda of intolerance and illiberalism in both countries.

The truth is, however, that to effectively oppose right-wing authoritarianism, we cannot simply go back to the failed status quo of the last several decades. Today in the United States, and in many other parts of the world, people are working longer hours for stagnating wages, and worry that their children will have a lower standard of living than they do.

Our job is to fight for a future in which new technology and innovation works to benefit all people, not just a few. It is not acceptable that the top 1% of the world's population owns half the planet's wealth, while the bottom 70% of the working age population accounts for just 2.7% of global wealth.

Together governments of the world must come together to end the absurdity of the rich and multinational corporations stashing over \$21tn in offshore bank accounts to

avoid paying their fair share of taxes and then demanding that their respective governments impose an austerity agenda on their working families.

It is not acceptable that the fossil fuel industry continues to make huge profits while their carbon emissions destroy the planet for our children and grandchildren.

It is not acceptable that a handful of multinational media giants, owned by a small number of billionaires, largely control the flow of information on the planet.

It is not acceptable that trade policies that benefit large multinational corporations and encourage a race to the bottom hurt working people throughout the world as they are written out of public view.

It is not acceptable that, with the cold war long behind us, countries around the world spend over \$1tn a year on weapons of destruction, while millions of children die of easily treatable diseases.

In order to effectively combat the rise of the international authoritarian axis, we need an international progressive movement that mobilizes behind a vision of shared prosperity, security and dignity for all people, and that addresses the massive global inequality that exists, not only in wealth but in political power.

Such a movement must be willing to think creatively and boldly about the world that we would like to see. While the authoritarian axis is committed to tearing down a post-second world war global order that they see as limiting their access to power and wealth, it is not enough for us to simply defend that order as it exists now.

We must look honestly at how that order has failed to deliver on many of its promises, and how authoritarians have adeptly exploited those failures in order to build support for their agenda. We must take the opportunity to reconceptualize a genuinely progressive global order based on human solidarity, an order that recognizes that every person on this planet shares a common humanity, that we all want our children to grow up healthy, to have a good education, have decent jobs, drink clean water, breathe clean air and live in peace.

Our job is to reach out to those in every corner of the world who share these values, and who are fighting for a better world.

In a time of exploding wealth and technology, we have the potential to create a decent life for all people. Our job is to build on our common humanity and do everything that we can to oppose all of the forces, whether unaccountable government power or unaccountable corporate power, who try to divide us up and set us against each other. We know that those forces work together across borders. We must do the same.

Bernie Saunders The Guardian (UK, September 2018)

(1204 words)

Question 3 – 40%

Answer ONE of the following questions. These questions refer to the theme you have studied, *Women in Society*. In your answer, you should make detailed references to two or three texts that you have studied; you may make brief mention of others, where relevant, if you wish.

1. “I am no bird, and no net ensnares me. I am a free human being with an independent will.” – Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*
Evaluate the women in your texts in terms of the quotation from *Jane Eyre*.

OR

2. From the evidence of the texts you have studied, to what extent has women’s role in society changed?