

**TEMASEK JUNIOR COLLEGE
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS
2014**

Higher 1 Literature

8811

Paper 1 Reading Literature

Time 3 hours

INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL CANDIDATES

Answer **three** questions; one from each of the sections.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

You are advised to spend an hour on each question.

Please begin each question on a fresh sheet of paper.

Please submit your scripts to each question separately.

This paper consists of 8 printed pages

SECTION A

1

Either (a) Write a critical commentary of the following poem, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by the writer's language, style and form.

Thrall¹

The room is sparsely furnished:
A chair, a table and a father.

He sits in the chair by the window.
There are books on the table.
The time is always just past lunch.

5

You tiptoe past as he eats his apple
And reads. He looks up, angry.
He has heard your asthmatic breathing.

He will read for years without looking up
Until your childhood is safely over:

10

Smells, untidiness and boring questions;
Blood, from the first skinned knees
To the first stained thighs;
The foolish tears of adolescent love.

One day he looks up, pleased
At the finished product.
Now he is ready to love you!

15

So he coaxes you in the voice reserved
For reading Keats². You agree to everything.

Drilled in silence and duty,
You will give him no cause for reproach.
He will boast of you to strangers.

20

When the afternoon is older
Shadows in a smaller room
Fall on the bed, the books, the father.

25

¹ a person who is morally or mentally enslaved by some power or influence.

² a famous English poet

You read aloud to him
'La Belle Dame sans Merci'³.
You feed him his medicine,
You tell him you love him.

You wait for his eyes to close at last
So you may write this poem.

30

Carolyn Kizer (b.1925)

³ "The Beautiful Lady Without Mercy", written by Keats.

Or (b) Write a critical commentary of the following poem, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by the writer's language, style and form.

How my true love and I lay without touching

How my true love and I lay without touching
How my hand journeyed to the drumlin¹ of his hip
my pelvis aching
Just like two saints and priests or nuns
my true love and I lay without touching. 5

How I would long for the brush of a kiss
to travel my cheek or the cheek of my groin
my heart aching
But just like two saints or priests or nuns
my true love and I lay without touching. 10

Last night in my dreams I spoke with his wife
his true love who had left him surely as they lay without touching
my heart for her was aching
For like two saints or priests or nuns
the two loves once lay without touching 15

But the dream of her faded before concentrating
each to each in our innocent mutual hating
her hand aching
to blind me with bullets to prevent herself from pining
for a once love she longed for and lay without touching. 20

Now my true love lies in the mutton of madness
'I was always troubled by sex,' he says, with great sadness
his wife and I aching
in our cold single beds with many seas dividing
as we think of the years that we spent without touching. 25

Leland Bardwell (b.1922)

¹ Irish word for an small hill

SECTION B

EDITH WHARTON: *The Age of Innocence* (Penguin)

2

Either (a) “This is a novel which offers as a solution, growth, balance and tolerance”. How far do you agree with this statement in light of Wharton’s narrative concerns in *The Age of Innocence*?

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following extract, relating to Wharton’s narrative style here and elsewhere in the play.

They went up to the library for coffee, and Archer lit a cigar and took own a volume of Michelet. He had taken to history in the evenings since May had shown a tendency to ask him to read aloud whenever she saw him with a volume of poetry: not that he disliked the sound of his own voice, but because he could always foresee her comments on what he read. In the days of their engagement she had simply (as he now perceived) echoed what he told her; but since he had ceased to provide her with opinions she had begun to hazard her own, with results destructive to his enjoyment of the works commented on. 5

Seeing that he had chosen history she fetched her workbasket, drew up an arm-chair to the green-shaded student lamp, and uncovered a cushion she was embroidering for his sofa. She was not a clever needle-woman; her large capable hands were made for riding, rowing and open-air activities; but since other wives embroidered cushions for their husbands she did not wish to omit this last link in her devotion. 10 15

She was so placed that Archer, by merely raising his eyes, could see her bent above her work-frame, her ruffled elbow-sleeves slipping back from her firm round arms, the betrothal sapphire shining on her left hand above her broad gold wedding-ring, and the right hand slowly and laboriously stabbing the canvas. As she sat thus, the lamplight full on her clear brow, he said to himself with a secret dismay that he would always know the thoughts behind it, that never, in all the years to come, would she surprise him by an unexpected mood, by a new idea, a weakness, a cruelty or an emotion. She had spent her poetry and romance on their short courting: the function was exhausted because the need was past. Now she was simply ripening into a copy of her mother, and mysteriously, by the very process, trying to turn him into a Mr. Welland. He laid down his book and stood up impatiently; and at once she raised her head. 20 25

"What's the matter?"

"The room is stifling: I want a little air." 30

He had insisted that the library curtains should draw backward and forward on a rod, so that they might be closed in the evening, instead of remaining nailed to a gilt cornice, and immovably looped up over layers of lace, as in the drawing-room; and he pulled them back and pushed up the sash, leaning out into the icy night. The mere fact of not looking at May, seated beside his table, under his lamp, the fact of seeing other houses, roofs, chimneys, of getting the sense of other lives outside his own, other cities beyond New York, and a whole world beyond his world, cleared his brain and made it easier to breathe. 35 40

After he had leaned out into the darkness for a few minutes he heard her say: "Newland! Do shut the window. You'll catch your death."

He pulled the sash down and turned back. "Catch my death!" he echoed; and he felt like adding: "But I've caught it already. I *am* dead--I've been dead for months and months." 45

And suddenly the play of the word flashed up a wild suggestion. What if it were *she* who was dead! If she were going to die--to die soon--and leave him free! The sensation of standing there, in that warm familiar room, and looking at her, and wishing her dead, was so strange, so fascinating and overmastering, that its enormity did not immediately strike him. He simply felt that chance had given him a new possibility to which his sick soul might cling. Yes, May might die--people did: young people, healthy people like herself: she might die, and set him suddenly free. 50

She glanced up, and he saw by her widening eyes that there must be something strange in his own. 55

"Newland! Are you ill?"

SECTION C

JOHN WEBSTER: *The Duchess of Malfi*

3

Either (a) Write an essay on Webster's presentation of sexual desire in *The Duchess of Malfi*.

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following extract, relating it to Webster's use of dramatic technique here and elsewhere in the play.

[Enter] TWO PILGRIMS to the Shrine of Our Lady of Loretto

I PILGRIM: I have not seen a goodlier shrine than this,
Yet I have visited many.

2 PILGRIM The Cardinal of Aragon
Is this day to resign his cardinal's hat,
His sister Duchess likewise is arrived
To pay her vow of pilgrimage. I expect
A noble ceremony.

5

I PILGRIM No question. -- They come.
Here the ceremony of the Cardinal's instalment, in the habit of a soldier: performed in delivering up his cross, hat, robes, and ring, at the shrine; and investing him with sword, helmet, shield, and spurs: then ANTONIO, the DUCHESS, and their children, having presented themselves at the shrine, are by a form of banishment in dumb-show, expressed towards them by the Cardinal and the State of Ancona, banished; during all which ceremony, this ditty is sung to very solemn music, by divers churchmen; and then
Exuent:

*Arms and honours deck thy story
To thy fame's eternal glory,
Adverse fortune ever fly thee,
No disastrous fate come nigh thee.
I alone will sing thy praises,
Whom to honour, virtue raises;
And thy study, that divine is,
Bent to martial discipline is.*

The author
disclaims this
ditty to be his

10

15

*Lay aside all those robes lie by thee;
Crown thy arts with arms: they'll beautify thee.
O worthy of worthiest name, adorned in this manner,
Lead bravely thy forces on, under war's warlike banner:
O, mayest thou prove fortunate in all martial courses,
Guide thou still, by skill, in arts and forces:
Victory attend thee nigh whilst fame sings loud thy powers,*

20

	<i>Triumphant conquest crown thy head, and blessings pour down showers.</i>	25
I PILGRIM	Here's a strange turn of state: who would have thought So great a lady would have matched herself Unto so mean a person? Yet the Cardinal Bears himself much too cruel.	
2 PILGRIM:	They are banished.	30
I PILGRIM:	But I would ask what power hath this state Of Ancona, to determine of a free prince?	
2 PILGRIM	They are a free state sir, and her brother showed How that the Pope, forehearing of her looseness, Hath seized into the protection of the Church The dukedom which she held as dowager.	35
I PILGRIM	But by what justice?	
2 PILGRIM	Sure I think by none, Only her brother's instigation.	
I PILGRIM	What was it with such violence he took Off from her finger?	40
2 PILGRIM	'Twas her wedding ring, Which he vowed shortly he would sacrifice To his revenge.	
I PILGRIM	Alas, Antonio, If that a man be thrust into a well, No matter who sets hand to't, his own weight Will bring him sooner to th' bottom. Come, let's hence. Fortune makes this conclusion general, 'All things do help th' unhappy man to fall.'	45 50

END OF PAPER

