

**TEMASEK JUNIOR COLLEGE
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS
2014**

Higher 2 Literature

9748/01

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 9 printed pages

SECTION A

1

Either (a) Critically compare the following poems, “The Trout” by John Montague and “Night Toad” by Susan Wicks, which focus on the portrayal of encounters between man and animals in nature. You must pay particular attention to imagery, the poets’ use of language and form.

A THE TROUT

Flat on the bank I parted
Rushes to ease my hands
In the water without a ripple
And tilt them slowly downstream
To where he lay, tendril-light, 5
In his fluid sensual dream.

Bodiless lord of creation,
I hung briefly above him
Savouring my own absence,
Senses expanding in the slow 10
Motion, the photographic calm
That grows before action.

As the curve of my hands
Swung under his body
He surged, with visible pleasure. 15
I was so preternaturally close
I could count every stipple
But still cast no shadow, until

The two palms crossed in a cage
Under the lightly pulsing gills. 20
Then (entering my own enlarged
Shape, which rode on the water)
I gripped. To this day I can
Taste his terror on my hands.

B Night Toad

You can hardly see him –
his outline, his cold skin
almost a dead leaf,
blotched brown, dull green,
khaki. He sits so quietly
pumping his quick breath
just at the edge of water
between ruts in the path.

5

And suddenly he is the centre
of a cone of light
falling from the night sky –
ruts running with liquid fire,
cobwebs imprinted on black,
each grass-blade clear
and separate – until the hiss
of human life removes itself,
the air no longer creaks,
the shaking stops
and he can crawl back
to where he came from.

10

15

But what was this,
If it was not death?

20

Or (b) Critically compare the following poems, “My Father is Shrinking” by Susan Wicks and “Climbing My Grandfather” by Andrew Waterhouse, which focus on the portrayal of old age. You must pay particular attention to imagery, the poets’ use of language and form.

A My Father is Shrinking

When we last hugged each other
in the garage,
our two heads were level.
Over his shoulder I could see
potato-sacks. 5

Another season
and in the dusty sunlight
I shall gather him to me,
smooth his collar,
bend to listen 10
for his precious breathing.

When he reaches
to my waist,
I shall no longer
detach his small hands 15
from my skirt,
escape his shrill voice
in the dawn garden.

When he comes to my knees,
I shall pick him up and rock him, 20
rub my face on the white
stubble of his cheek,
see his silver skull
gleam up at me
through thin combings. 25

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

*Triumphant conquest crown thy head, and blessings pour
down showers.* 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 35
The dukedom which she held as dowager.

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 40
Off from her finger?

2 PILGRIM 'Twas her wedding ring,
Which he vowed shortly he would sacrifice
To his revenge.

I PILGRIM Alas, Antonio, 45
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.' 50

END OF PAPER