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## English Literature Admissions Test

4501/11

Wednesday 6 November 2013

1 hour 30 minutes

### Instructions to Candidates

**Please read this page carefully, but do not open the question paper until told to do so.**

A separate 8-page answer booklet is provided. Please check you have one.

Write your name, date of birth and centre number in the spaces provided on the answer booklet. Please write very clearly, preferably in black ink.

You should allow at least 30 minutes for reading this question paper, making notes and preparing your answer.

At the end of the examination, you must hand in both your answer booklet and this question paper. Any rough notes or plans that you make should be written only in your answer booklet.

No texts, dictionaries or sources of reference may be brought into the examination.



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*This paper consists of 9 printed pages and 3 blank pages.*



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*Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes.*

*You should spend at least 30 minutes reading and annotating the passages and in preparing your answer.*

**The following poems and extracts from longer prose and drama texts are all linked by a common topic: 'murder'. They are arranged chronologically by date of composition or publication. Read all the material carefully, and then complete the task below.**

- |     |                                                                                  |         |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| (a) | 'The Civil Servant', a poem by Michael Longley<br>(b. 1939)                      | page 4  |
| (b) | From <i>Under Milk Wood</i> (1954), a radio play by Dylan Thomas                 | page 5  |
| (c) | From <i>The Secret Agent</i> (1907), a novel by Joseph Conrad                    | page 6  |
| (d) | A letter to Samuel Coleridge from Charles Lamb<br>(3 <sup>rd</sup> October 1796) | page 7  |
| (e) | 'Edward', an anonymous ballad (first printed 1765)                               | page 8  |
| (f) | From <i>Richard III</i> (c.1592), a play by William Shakespeare                  | page 10 |

**Task:**

**Select two or three of the passages (a) to (f) and compare and contrast them in any ways that seem interesting to you, paying particular attention to distinctive features of structure, language and style. In your introduction, indicate *briefly* what you intend to explore or illustrate through close reading of your chosen passages.**

***This task is designed to assess your responsiveness to unfamiliar literary material and your skills in close reading. Marks are not awarded for references to other texts or authors you have studied.***

(a) 'The Civil Servant', a poem by Michael Longley (b. 1939)

He was preparing an Ulster Fry for breakfast  
When someone walked into the kitchen and shot him:  
A bullet entered his mouth and pierced his skull,  
The books he had read, the music he could play.

5 He lay in his dressing gown and pyjamas  
While they dusted the dresser for fingerprints  
And then shuffled backwards across the garden  
With notebooks, cameras and measuring tapes.

10 They rolled him up like a red carpet and left  
Only a bullet hole in the cutlery drawer:  
Later his widow took a hammer and chisel  
And removed the black keys from his piano.

**(b) From *Under Milk Wood* (1954), a radio play by Dylan Thomas**

5 FIRST VOICE: In the blind-drawn dark dining-room of School House, dusty and echoing as a dining-room in a vault, Mr and Mrs Pugh are silent over cold grey cottage pie. Mr Pugh reads, as he forks the shroud meat in, from 'Lives of the Great Poisoners'. He has bound a plain brown-paper cover round the book. Slyly, between slow mouthfuls, he sidespies up at Mrs Pugh, poisons her with his eye, then goes on reading. He underlines certain passages and smiles in secret.

MRS PUGH: Persons with manners do not read at table,

10 FIRST VOICE: says Mrs Pugh. She swallows a digestive tablet as big as a horse-pill, washing it down with clouded peasoup water.

[Pause

MRS PUGH: Some persons were brought up in pigsties.

MR PUGH: Pigs don't read at table, dear.

15 FIRST VOICE: Bitterly she flicks dust from the broken cruet. It settles on the pie in a thin gnat-rain.

MR PUGH: Pigs can't read, my dear.

MRS PUGH: I know one who can.

20 FIRST VOICE: Alone in the hissing laboratory of his wishes, Mr Pugh minces among bad vats and jeroboams, tiptoes through spinneys of murdering herbs, agony dancing in his crucibles, and mixes especially for Mrs Pugh a venomous porridge unknown to toxicologists which will scald and viper through her until her ears fall off like figs, her toes grow big and black as balloons, and steam comes screaming out of her navel.

MR PUGH: You know best, dear,

25 FIRST VOICE: says Mr Pugh, and quick as a flash he ducks her in rat soup.

MRS PUGH: What's that book by your trough, Mr Pugh?

MR PUGH: It's a theological work, my dear. 'Lives of the Great Saints'.

FIRST VOICE: Mrs Pugh smiles. An icicle forms in the cold air of the dining-vault.

(c) From *The Secret Agent* (1907), a novel by Joseph Conrad

“Come here,” he said in a peculiar tone, which might have been the tone of brutality, but was intimately known to Mrs Verloc as the note of wooing.

5 She started forward at once, as if she were still a loyal woman bound to that man by an unbroken contract. Her right hand skimmed slightly the end of the table, and when she had passed on towards the sofa the carving knife had vanished without the slightest sound from the side of the dish. Mr Verloc heard the creaky plank in the floor, and was content. He waited. Mrs Verloc was coming. As if the homeless soul of Stevie had flown for shelter straight to the breast of his sister, guardian and protector, the resemblance of her face with that of her brother grew at every step, even to the droop of the lower lip, even to the slight  
10 divergence of the eyes. But Mr Verloc did not see that. He was lying on his back and staring upwards. He saw partly on the ceiling and partly on the wall the moving shadow of an arm with a clenched hand holding a carving knife. It flickered up and down. Its movements were leisurely. They were leisurely enough for Mr Verloc to recognise the limb and the weapon.

15 They were leisurely enough for him to take in the full meaning of the portent, and to taste the flavour of death rising in his gorge. His wife had gone raving mad—murdering mad. They were leisurely enough for the first paralysing effect of this discovery to pass away before a resolute determination to come out victorious from the ghastly struggle with that armed lunatic. They were leisurely enough for Mr Verloc to elaborate a plan of defence  
20 involving a dash behind the table, and the felling of the woman to the ground with a heavy wooden chair. But they were not leisurely enough to allow Mr Verloc the time to move either hand or foot. The knife was already planted in his breast. It met no resistance on its way. Hazard has such accuracies. Into that plunging blow, delivered over the side of the couch, Mrs Verloc had put all the inheritance of her immemorial and obscure descent, the  
25 simple ferocity of the age of caverns, and the unbalanced nervous fury of the age of bar-rooms. Mr Verloc, the Secret Agent, turning slightly on his side with the force of the blow, expired without stirring a limb, in the muttered sound of the word “Don’t” by way of protest.

Mrs Verloc had let go the knife, and her extraordinary resemblance to her late brother had faded, had become very ordinary now. She drew a deep breath, the first easy breath since  
30 Chief Inspector Heat had exhibited to her the labelled piece of Stevie’s overcoat. She leaned forward on her folded arms over the side of the sofa. She adopted that easy attitude not in order to watch or gloat over the body of Mr Verloc, but because of the undulatory and swinging movements of the parlour, which for some time behaved as though it were at sea in a tempest. She was giddy but calm. She had become a free  
35 woman with a perfection of freedom which left her nothing to desire and absolutely nothing to do, since Stevie’s urgent claim on her devotion no longer existed. Mrs Verloc, who thought in images, was not troubled now by visions, because she did not think at all. And she did not move. She was a woman enjoying her complete irresponsibility and endless leisure, almost in the manner of a corpse. She did not move, she did not think. Neither did  
40 the mortal envelope of the late Mr Verloc reposing on the sofa.

(d) **A letter to Samuel Coleridge from Charles Lamb (3<sup>rd</sup> October 1796)**

- My dearest friend, – Your letter was an inestimable treasure to me. It will be a comfort to you, I know, to know that our prospects are somewhat brighter. My poor dear, dearest sister, the unhappy and unconscious instrument of the Almighty's judgments on our house, is restored to her senses, to a dreadful sense and recollection of what has past, awful to her mind and impressive (as it must be to the end of life), but tempered with religious resignation and the reasonings of a sound judgment, which in this early stage knows how to distinguish between a deed committed in a transient fit of frenzy, and the terrible guilt of a mother's murder. I have seen her. I found her, this morning, calm and serene; far, very, very far, from an indecent, forgetful serenity. She has a most affectionate and tender concern for what has happened. Indeed, from the beginning, frightful and hopeless as her disorder seemed, I had confidence enough in her strength of mind and religious principle to look forward to a time when – even she – might recover tranquillity. God be praised, Coleridge, wonderful as it is to tell, I have never once been otherwise than collected and calm; even on the dreadful day and in the midst of the terrible scene, I preserved a tranquillity which bystanders may have construed into indifference, – a tranquillity not of despair. Is it folly or sin in me to say that it was a religious principle that most supported me? I allow much to other favourable circumstances. I felt that I had something else to do than to regret. On that first evening my aunt was lying insensible, to all appearance like one dying; my father with his poor forehead plastered over, from a wound he had received from a daughter dearly loved by him, and who loved him no less dearly; my mother a dead and murdered corpse in the next room, – yet was I wonderfully supported, I closed not my eyes in sleep that night, but lay without terrors and without despair, I have lost no sleep since, I had been long used not to rest in things of sense, – had endeavoured after a comprehension of mind unsatisfied with the "ignorant present time;" and this kept me up. I had the whole weight of the family thrown on me; for my brother, little disposed (I speak not without tenderness for him) at any time to take care of old age and infirmities, had now, with his bad leg, an exemption from such duties; and I was now left alone.
- One little incident may serve to make you understand my way of managing my mind, Within a day or two after the fatal one, we dressed for dinner a tongue which we had had salted for some weeks in the house. As I sat down, a feeling like remorse struck me: this tongue poor Mary got for me, and can I partake of it now, when she is far away? A thought occurred and relieved me; if I give in to this way of feeling, there is not a chair, a room, an object in our rooms, that will not awaken the keenest griefs; I must rise above such weaknesses. I hope this was not want of true feeling.

## (e) 'Edward', an anonymous ballad (first printed 1765)

- "Why does your brand\* so drop with blood,  
 Edward, Edward,  
 Why does your brand so drop with blood,  
 And why so sad gang ye,\* Oh?"
- 5 "Oh I have killed my hawk so good,  
 Mother, mother,  
 Oh I have killed my hawk so good,  
 And I had no more but he, Oh."
- "Your hawk's blood was never so red,  
 Edward, Edward,  
 Your hawk's blood was never so red,  
 My dear son I tell thee, Oh."
- 10 "Oh I have killed my red-roan steed,  
 Mother, mother,  
 15 Oh I have killed my red-roan steed,  
 That once was so fair and free, Oh."
- "Your steed was old, and you have got more,  
 Some other dole ye drie,\* Oh."
- 20 "Oh I have killed my father dear,  
 Alas and woe is me, Oh!"
- "And what penance will you do for that,  
 Edward, Edward?  
 And what penance will you do for that?  
 My dear son, now tell me, Oh."
- 25 "I'll set my feet in yonder boat,\*  
 Mother, mother,  
 I'll set my feet in yonder boat,  
 And I'll fare over the sea, Oh."
- "And what will you do with your towers and your hall,  
 Edward, Edward?  
 And what will you do with your towers and your hall,  
 That were so fair to see, Oh?"
- 30 "I'll let them stand till down they fall,  
 Mother, mother,  
 35 I'll let them stand till down they fall,  
 For here never more must I be, Oh."
- \*sword
- \*why do you look so sad
- \*some other sorrow troubles you
- \*that boat over there



- “And what will you leave to your bairns\* and your wife,  
Edward, Edward?”
- 40 And what will you leave to your bairns and your wife,  
When you go over the sea, Oh?”
- “The world’s room, let them beg through life,  
Mother, mother,  
The world’s room, let them beg through life,  
For them never more will I see, Oh.”
- 45 “And what will you leave to your own mother dear,  
Edward, Edward?  
And what will you leave to your own mother dear?  
My dear son, now tell me, Oh.”
- 50 “The curse of hell from me shall you bear,  
Mother, mother,  
The curse of hell from me shall you bear,  
Such counsels\* you gave to me, Oh.”

\*children

\*advice

(f) From *Richard III* (c.1592), a play by William Shakespeare

- SECOND MURDERER: What, shall we stab him as he sleeps?
- FIRST MURDERER: No; then he will say 'twas done cowardly, when he wakes.
- SECOND MURDERER: When he wakes! why, fool, he shall never wake till the judgment-day.
- 5 FIRST MURDERER: Why, then he will say we stabbed him sleeping.
- SECOND MURDERER: The urging of that word 'judgment' hath bred a kind of remorse in me.
- FIRST MURDERER: What, art thou afraid?
- 10 SECOND MURDERER: Not to kill him, having a warrant for it; but to be damned for killing him, from which no warrant can defend us.
- FIRST MURDERER: I thought thou hadst been resolute.
- SECOND MURDERER: So I am, to let him live.
- FIRST MURDERER: Back to the Duke of Gloucester, tell him so.
- 15 SECOND MURDERER: I pray thee, stay a while: I hope my holy humour will change; 'twas wont to hold me but while one would tell twenty.
- FIRST MURDERER: How dost thou feel thyself now?
- SECOND MURDERER: 'Faith, some certain dregs of conscience are yet within me.
- FIRST MURDERER: Remember our reward, when the deed is done.
- SECOND MURDERER: 'Zounds, he dies: I had forgot the reward.
- 20 FIRST MURDERER: Where is thy conscience now?
- SECOND MURDERER: In the Duke of Gloucester's purse.

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