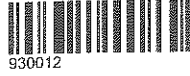


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93001Q



Scholarship 2013 English

9.30 am Tuesday 12 November 2013
Time allowed: Three hours
Total marks: 24

QUESTION BOOKLET

There are three sections in this examination:

- Section A: Close reading of unfamiliar texts
- Section B: Responding to literature and language
- Section C: Exploring issues in literature and language.

Write **THREE** essays in total, one from each section, in Answer Booklet 93001A.

Each essay is worth eight marks.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–7 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

YOU MAY KEEP THIS BOOKLET AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.

SECTION A: CLOSE READING OF UNFAMILIAR TEXTS

Write an essay comparing the ways that the writers explore their own perceptions of art in Text A and Text B.

The essay must focus on the way(s) each writer has crafted the text by using techniques to reinforce the content. Techniques include vocabulary, phrasing, point of view, positioning of the reader, figurative language, and structure.

TEXT A

The Art Instinct

- Somewhat Academic
- Viewpoint of seriousness and
- Tone literal

It is time to look at the arts in the light of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution—to talk about instinct and art.

What can Darwin possibly tell us about artistic creation? To be sure, Darwinian evolution may explain our physical features—the function of the pancreas or the origin of our opposable thumb—but our love for Emily Dickinson's poetry, Bach's Mass in B minor, or Jackson Pollock's painting *One: Number 31, 1950*? The idea that humans have a mating instinct—perhaps. A maternal instinct, maybe. But an art instinct? The very idea seems oxymoronic.

Instincts, we tend to think, are automatic, unconscious patterns of behaviour. The spider's web that glistens in the morning dew was dictated by a genetic code in the spider's tiny brain. The web may be a lovely sight to our eyes, but its beauty is a mere by-product of a spider's way of enjoying breakfast. From the standpoint of either the spider or the human observer, such pretty accidents of nature are a long way from how we normally regard works of art.

Art works are the most complex and diverse of human achievements, creations of free human will and conscious execution. Art-making requires rational choice, intuitive talent, and the highest levels of learned, not innate, skills. Every member of a web-spinning spider species produces essentially the same web from the same code as every other member. Art works, on the other hand, tend toward a personal expression that gives them dazzling variety: no two Monet water-lily paintings, Greek tragedies, or Brahms clarinet sonatas are identical—not even two performances of the same tragedy or sonata. The arts are about particularity. They bring together traditions, genres, an artist's private experience, fantasy, and emotion, fused and transformed in aesthetic imagination.

On top of this, artistic works and performances are often among the most gaudy and flamboyant of human creations—seemingly the opposite of pragmatic behaviour—while at the rarefied level of the most profound and enduring masterpieces, they can reveal an elevated spirituality unparalleled in human experience. Any way you look at it, the arts have nothing to do with the mundane facts of body and brain that Darwinian evolution typically explains.

Source (adapted): Denis Dutton, *The Art Instinct: Beauty, Pleasure, and Human Evolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp 1–2.

TEXT B

Before the Mirror

How many of us still remember
 when Picasso's "Girl Before a Mirror" hung
 at the turning of the stairs in the pre-
 expansion Museum of Modern Art?
 Millions of us, probably, but we form
 a dwindling population. Garish *Simple* 5
 and brush-slashed and yet as balanced
 as a cardboard Queen in a deck of giant cards,
 the painting proclaimed, "Enter here
 and abandon preconception." She bounced 10
 the erotic balls of herself back and forth
 between reflection and reality. *- Allows one to
 reflect on
 one's own life.*



Now I discover, in the recent re-
 trospective at the same establishment, 15
 that the vivid painting dates
 from March of 1932,
 the very month in which I first saw light,
 squinting in nostalgia for the womb.
 I bend closer, inspecting. The blacks,
 the stripy cyanide greens are still uncracked, 20
 I note with satisfaction; the cherry reds
 and lemon yellows full of childish juice.

*Art is an unending expression,
 is not diminished by the
 passage of time even
 though humans are.*

No sag, no wrinkle. Fresh as paint. Back then
 they knew how, I reflect, to lay it on.

Nostalgic undertones.

Sources

Text: John Updike, "Before the Mirror", *The New Yorker*, 9 September 1996, p 64.

Image: <http://enthemata.wordpress.com/2013/01/05/sarantakos-32/> (accessed 18 January 2013).

Text A

- Literal, academic tone
- Highlights the needs for successful art

*• Both show that
 art is not as
 precise as science.*

Text B

- Figurative, nostalgic tone
- Merely a figurative look into the effect of art on people.

SECTION B: RESPONDING TO LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE

Write a coherent and engaging essay in response to ONE of the statements numbered 1–14. Use the statement as the focus for an in-depth discussion of **one or more long texts** OR **a range of short texts**.

Your essay should reflect independent thinking and show extensive knowledge of appropriate text(s), their purposes, and the methods used in crafting them.

Note: No content or quotations used in your answer to this section should be repeated in Section C.

STATEMENTS (Choose ONE)

1. **Non-fiction** draws readers towards frontiers of meaning, and an understanding of how societies work.
- ~~2.~~ In the best **short stories** the unit of time is the minute, not the month.
- ~~3.~~ **Novels** either celebrate or condemn the follies of their characters.
4. **Novels** are driven by action and events, but better reward those readers who concentrate on the thoughts and ideas that underpin them.
- ~~5.~~ To experience **poetry** fully, the reader must explore its intricacies and details.
- ~~6.~~ **Poetry** offers silence as much as substance – what is left unsaid is often as important as the written word.
7. The real objective of **drama (non-Shakespearean)** is the exploration of the complicated nature of the individual. *Streetcar Named Desire*
- ~~8.~~ **Shakespeare's** greatest talent is that he never tells us what to think.
- ~~9.~~ **Shakespeare** manages to explore realistic characters within realistic, complex, and dramatic situations.
- ~~10.~~ **Films** show the everyday dilemmas of average people suffering, colliding, and surviving.
- ~~11.~~ Memorable **films** should make us forget we are sitting in a movie theatre.
- ~~12.~~ **New media** are more than mechanical gimmicks for creating worlds of illusion – they provide new and unique powers of expression.
- ~~13.~~ **Language** has the power to change reality.
- ~~14.~~ There is no such thing as an honest **documentary**.

Section B

A Streetcar Named Desire.

- Drama allows an outlook into the effects of setting on the individual
- Allows an outlook into relationships on the individual
- Allows an analysis of the past on the individual.

SECTION C: EXPLORING ISSUES IN LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE

Write a coherent and engaging essay in response to ONE of the statements numbered 15–24.

Your essay should reflect independent thinking about an issue and show extensive knowledge of a range of appropriate texts, their purposes, and the methods used in crafting them.

Note: No content or quotations used in your answer to Section B should be repeated in this section.

STATEMENTS (Choose ONE)

15. The outraged and the opportunistic have taken the medium of the book and made it into a weapon.
16. Words have great power, in the hands of those who wield them.
17. The digital age has reshaped literature.
18. Literature attempts to find a language and structure that formalises the craziness of life.
19. All literature labours to make language adequately express imagination and experience.
20. Literature empowers us as readers to confront our assumptions – it challenges us to think about the world around us and to re-evaluate what we see. *A Passage to India
Brideshead Revisited*
21. A love of literature is a textually transmitted disease, normally contracted in childhood.
22. Through literature we know the past, govern the present, and influence the future.
23. Literature is interested in the complex space shared by reader and writer.
24. The power of literature is in its ability to tell the truth about the unspeakable.

~~Brideshead Revisited~~
Belgian

Assumptions

- Superiority
- Homosexuality
- Religion
- Love

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