科目 西洋文學概論

類組別 024

共2頁第一頁 *請在試卷、答案卡內作答

Please answer TWO of the following questions in English. (100%)

Question 1 (50%)

The following excerpt is taken from Homer's *Odyssey*. Please read the recognition scene between Odysseus and Penelope carefully and give a close reading of your understanding of it.

參考用

He sat then in the same chair by the pillar, facing his silent wife, and said:

"Strange woman, the immortals of Olympos made you hard, harder than any. Who else in the world would keep aloof as you do from her husband if he returned to her from years of trouble, cast on his own land in the twentieth year?

Nurse, make up a bed for me to sleep on. Her heart is iron in her breast."

Penélopê

spoke to Odysseus now. She said:

"Strange man, if man you are . . . This is no pride on my part nor scorn for you—not even wonder, merely. I know so well how you—how he—appeared boarding the ship for Troy. But all the same . . .

Make up his bed for him, Eurýkleia. Place it outside the bedchamber my lord built with his own hands. Pile the big bed with fleeces, rugs, and sheets of purest linen."

With this she tried him to the breaking point, and he turned on her in a flash raging:

"Woman, by heaven you've stung me now! Who dared to move my bed? No builder had the skill for that—unless a god came down to turn the trick. No mortal in his best days could budge it with a crowbar. There is our pact and pledge, our secret sign, built into that bed—my handiwork and no one else's!

An old trunk of olive grew like a pillar on the building plot, and I laid out our bedroom round that tree, lined up the stone walls, built the walls and roof, gave it a doorway and smooth-fitting doors. Then I lopped off the silvery leaves and branches, hewed and shaped that stump from the roots up into a bedpost, drilled it, let it serve as model for the rest. I planed them all, inlaid them all with silver, gold and ivory, and stretched a bed between—a pliant web of oxhide thongs dyed crimson.

There's our sign! I know no more. Could someone's else's hand have sawn that trunk and dragged the frame away?"

Their secret! as she heard it told, her knees grew tremulous and weak, her heart failed her. With eyes brimming tears she ran to him, throwing her arms around his neck, and kissed him, murmuring:

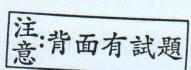
"Do not rage at me, Odysseus! No one ever matched your caution! Think what difficulty the gods gave: they denied us life together in our prime and flowering years, kept us from crossing into age together. Forgive me, don't be angry. I could not welcome you with love on sight! I armed myself long ago against the frauds of men, impostors who might come—and all those many whose underhanded ways bring evil on! Helen of Argos, daughter of Zeus and Leda, would she have joined the stranger, lain with him, if she had known her destiny? known the Akhaians in arms would bring her back to her own country? Surely a goddess moved her to adultery, her blood unchilled by war and evil coming, the years, the desolation; ours, too. But here and now, what sign could be so clear as this of our own bed? No other man has ever laid eyes on itonly my own slave, Aktoris, that my father sent with me as a gift-she kept our door. You make my stiff heart know that I am yours."

Now from his breast into his eyes the ache of longing mounted, and he wept at last, his dear wife, clear and faithful, in his arms, longed for

as the sunwarmed earth is longed for by a swimmer spent in rough water where his ship went down under Poseidon's blows, gale winds and tons of sea.

Few men can keep alive through a big surf to crawl, clotted with brine, on kindly beaches in joy, in joy, knowing the abyss behind: and so she too rejoiced, her gaze upon her husband, her white arms round him pressed as though forever.

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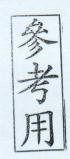
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Question 2 (50%)

The following excerpt is taken from Virgil's *Aeneid*. A high point of the second book, the story of the fall of Troy, is the death of Priam at the hand of Achilles' son Pyrrhus, who is also called Neoptolemus, a name that means "New War." Please read the excerpt carefully and give a close reading of your understanding of it.



What was the fate of Priam, you may ask. Seeing his city captive, seeing his own Royal portals rent apart, his enemies In the inner rooms, the old man uselessly Put on his shoulders, shaking with old age, Armor unused for years, belted a sword on, And made for the massed enemy to die. Under the open sky in a central court Stood a big altar; near it, a laurel tree Of great age, leaning over, in deep shade Embowered the Penatës. At this altar Hecuba and her daughters, like white doves Blown down in a black storm, clung together, Enfolding holy images in their arms. Now, seeing Priam in a young man's gear, She called out:

'My poor husband, what mad thought Drove you to buckle on these weapons? Where are you trying to go? The time is past For help like this, for this kind of defending, Even if my own Hector could be here. Come to me now: the altar will protect us, Or else you'll die with us.'

She drew him close, Heavy with years, and made a place for him To rest on the consecrated stone.

Now see

Politës, one of Priam's sons, escaped From Pyrrhus' butchery and on the run Through enemies and spears, down colonnades, Through empty courtyards, wounded. Close behind Comes Pyrrhus burning for the death-stroke: has him, Catches him now, and lunges with the spear. Goes down, pouring out his life with blood. Now Priam, in the very midst of death, Would neither hold his peace nor spare his anger.

'For what you've done, for what you've dared,' he said, 'If there is care in heaven for atrocity,
May the gods render fitting thanks, reward you
As you deserve. You forced me to look on
At the destruction of my son: defiled
A father's eyes with death. That great Achilles
You claim to be the son of—and you lie—
Was not like you to Priam, his enemy;
To me who threw myself upon his mercy
He showed compunction, gave me back for burial
The bloodless corpse of Hector, and returned me
To my own realm.'

The old man threw his spear With feeble impact; blocked by the ringing bronze, It hung there harmless from the jutting boss. Then Pyrrhus answered:

'You'll report the news To Pelidës, my father; don't forget My sad behavior, the degeneracy Of Neoptolemus. Now die.'

With this,
To the altar step itself he dragged him trembling,
Slipping in the pooled blood of his son,
And took him by the hair with his left hand.
The sword flashed in his right; up to the hilt
He thrust it in his body.

That was the end Of Priam's age, the doom that took him off, With Troy in flames before his eyes, his towers Headlong fallen—he that in other days Had ruled in pride so many lands and peoples, The power of Asia.

On the distant shore
The vast trunk headless lies without a name.