ENS ADMISSION EXAM

UNIVERSITY OF TUNIS	**ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE**	**EXAM:** LITERATURE
Ecole Normale Supérieure		**DURATION:** 4 hours
JULY 2007 SESSION		**COEFFICIENT:** 3

Discuss ONE of the following topics, illustrating your ideas with examples from literary works you know:

(i) Tragedy is that form of art which requires the intolerable burden of God's presence.

(ii) Literature is not chaste; if it is, it is not literature.

(iii) The author's mission is not to be messenger; it is rather to construct representations of people who are prisoners slipping their chains and finding light.

END OF DISSERTATION EXAM

What do we mean by being 'talented' or 'gifted'? The most obvious way is to look at the work someone does and if they are capable of significant success, label them as talented. The purely quantitative route – 'percentage definition' – looks not at individuals, but at simple percentages, such as the top five per cent of the population, and labels them – by definition – as gifted. This definition has fallen from favour, eclipsed by the advent of IQ tests, favoured by luminaries such as Professor Hans Eysenck, where a series of written or verbal tests of general intelligence leads to a score of intelligence.

The IQ test has been eclipsed in turn. Most people studying intelligence and creativity in the new millennium now prefer a broader definition, using a multifaceted approach where talents in many areas are recognised rather than purely concentrating on academic achievement. If we are therefore assuming that talented, creative or gifted individuals may need to be assessed across a range of abilities, does this mean intelligence can run in families as a genetic or inherited tendency? Mental dysfunction – such as schizophrenia – can, so is an efficient mental capacity passed on from parent to child?

Animal experiments throw some light on this question, and on the whole area of whether it is genetics, the environment or a combination of the two that allows for intelligence and creative ability. Different strains of rats show great differences in intelligence or 'rat reasoning'. If these are brought up in normal conditions and then run through a maze to reach a food goal, the 'bright' strain make far fewer wrong turns that the 'dull' ones. But if the environment is made dull and boring the number of errors becomes equal. Return the rats to an exciting maze and the discrepancy returns as before – but is much smaller. In other words, a dull rat in a stimulating environment will almost do as well as a bright rat who is bored in a normal one. This principle applies to humans too – someone may be born with innate intelligence, but their environment probably has the final say over whether they become creative or even a genius.

Evidence now exists that most young children, if given enough opportunities and encouragement, are able to achieve significant and sustainable levels of academic or sporting prowess. Bright or creative children are often physically very active at the same time, and so may receive more parental attention as a result – almost by default – in order to ensure their safety. They may also talk earlier, and this, in turn, breeds parental interest. This can sometimes cause problems with other siblings who may feel jealous even though they themselves may be bright. Their creative talents may be undervalued and so never come to fruition. Two themes seem to run through famously creative families as a result. The first is that the parents were able to identify the talents of each child, and nurture and encourage these accordingly but in an even-handed manner. Individual differences were encouraged, and friendly sibling rivalry was not seen as a particular problem. If the father is, say, a famous actor, there is no undue pressure for his children to follow him onto the boards, but instead their chosen interests are encouraged. There need not even be any obvious talent in such a family since there always needs to be someone who sets the family career in motion, as in the case of the Sheen acting dynasty.

Martin Sheen was the seventh of ten children born to a Spanish immigrant father and an Irish mother. Despite intense parental disapproval he turned his back on entrance exams to university and borrowed cash from a local priest to start a fledgling acting career. His acting successes in films such as *Badlands* and *Apocalypse Now* made him one of the most highly-regarded actors of the 1970s. Three sons – Emilio Estevez, Ramon Estevez and Charlie Sheen – have followed him into the profession as a consequence of being inspired by his motivation and enthusiasm.

A stream seems to run (1) . . . creative families. Such children are not necessarily smothered with love (2) . . . their parents. They feel loved and wanted, and are secure in their home, but are often more surrounded by an atmosphere of work and where following a calling appears to be important. They may see from their parents (3) . . . it takes time and dedication to be master of a craft, and so are in less of a (4) . . . to achieve for themselves once they start to work.

The generation of creativity is complex: it is a (5) . . . of genetics, the environment, parental teaching and luck that (6) . . . how successful or talented family members are. This last point – luck – is often not mentioned where talent is

concerned but plays an (7) ... part. Mozart, (8) ... by many to be the finest composer of all time, was lucky to be living in an age that encouraged the writing of music. He was brought (9) ... surrounded by it, his father was a musician who encouraged him to the point of giving up his job to (10) ... his child genius, and he learnt musical composition with frightening speed – the speed of a genius. Mozart (11) ... simply wanted to create the finest music (12) ... written but did not necessarily view himself as a genius – he could write sublime music at will, and so often preferred to lead a hedonistic lifestyle that he found more exciting than writing music to order.

Albert Einstein and Bill Gates are two more examples of people (13) ... talents have blossomed by (14) ... of the times they were living in. Einstein was a solitary, somewhat slow child who had (15) ... at home but whose phenomenal (16) ... emerged without any obvious parental input. This may have been partly due to the fact that at the start of the 20th Century a lot of the Newtonian laws of physics were being (17) ..., leaving a fertile (18) ... for ideas such as his to be developed. Bill Gates may have had the creative vision to (19) ... Microsoft, but without the new computer age dawning at the same time he may never have achieved the position on the world stage he now (20) ... .

ENS ADMISSION EXAM		
UNIVERSITY OF TUNIS	**ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE**	**EXAM:** LANGUAGE
Ecole Normale Supérieure		**DURATION:** 3 hours
JULY 2007 SESSION		**COEFFICIENT:** 2

This exam comes in two parts:

(i) READING COMPREHENSION (20 points)
(ii) GRAMMER IN CONTEXT (20 points)

(i) READING COMPREHENSION

Read the following text and answer ALL questions. For questions 7, 8, and 9 DO NOT REWRITE THE FULL SENTENCE, BUT SIMPLY IN YOUR EXAM SHEET REPORT THE LETTER THAT CORRESPONDS TO YOUR CHOICE IN FRONT OF THE NUMBER OF THE QUESTION.

1. **Focusing on paragraphs 1 and 2, what different views of intelligence are discussed? (4 points).**

2. **In paragraph 1 and line 4, find the antecedent/referent of "they" and explain their relation (2 points).**

3. **Summarize in paragraph 3 the reasoning about the role of nature and nurture in the cultivation of intelligence (4 points).**

4. **In paragraph 4, analyze the following construction for linguistic form and grammatical function: "that most young children ... are able to achieve significant and sustainable levels of academic or sporting prowess" (2 points).**

5. **In paragraph 4 still but line 12, attach "their" to its antecedent/referent (1 point).**

6. **In paragraph 5 and line 3, analyze the following construction for linguistic form and grammatical function: "despite intense parental disapproval" (2 points).**

7. **Which THREE of the following does the writer regard as a feature of creative families (1.5 points):**

(A) a higher than average level of parental affection;
(B) compensation between brothers and sisters;
(C) parents who demonstrate vocational commitment;
(D) strong motivation to take exams and attend university;
(E) a patient approach to achieving success;
(F) the identification of the most talented child in the family.

8. **Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer in the Reading Passage? On your exam sheet, write:**

YES: ***If the statement agrees with the writer's claims***
NO: ***If the statement contradicts the writer's claims***
NOT GIVEN: ***If it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this*** **(2.5 points):**

(A) Intelligence tests have now been proved to be unreliable.
(B) The brother or sister of a gifted older child may fail to fulfill their own potential.
(C) The importance of luck in the genius equation tends to be ignored.
(D) Mozart was acutely aware of his own remarkable talent.
(E) Einstein and Gates would have achieved success in any era.

9. **From the list below, choose the most suitable title for the Reading Passage (1 point):**

(A) Geniuses in their time
(B) Education for the gifted
(C) Revising the definition of intelligence
(D) Nurturing talent within the family

(ii) GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT

This part starts with paragraph 6 in the Reading Passage. On your exam sheet, write the word or expression that corresponds to the numbered blank space.

END OF LANGUAGE EXAM

ENS ADMISSION EXAM

UNIVERSITY OF TUNIS	**ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE**	**EXAM:** TRANSLATION
Ecole Normale Supérieure		**DURATION:** 3 hours
JULY 2007 SESSION		**COEFFICIENT:** 2

Each student is expected to translate TWO texts EITHER from English into Arabic and Arabic into English OR from English into French and French into English.

كان الوقتُ ظهرًا عندما أقبل عبدُ الحميد على حليمة يقولُ لها في لهجةٍ حازمةٍ جادّة :

ـ إنّك ستحملين هذه الحقيبةَ إلى أحد الاخوان ... الحقيبةُ فيها سلاح ... ستحملينها إلى حَمّام « سيدي عبد القادر » بزنقة الكبدة . واختصارًا للطريق ، وربحًا للوقت ستمرّين من ساحة باب سويقة ... انتظري قليلا في مدخل الحمام ... سوف يأتيك شابٌّ أسمرُ ، حاسرُ الرأس ، يضع على عينيه نظاراتٍ سوداءَ . ويمسك بيده اليسرى عُلبةَ سجائر ... سيسألك عما إذا خرجت « حلّومة » من الحمّام ... إذ ذاك سلّمي له الحقيبة وقولي له : ستخرُجُ « حلّومة » بعد خمسِ دقائق ... ثم عودي من حَيثُ أتيتِ » .

وفي الموعدِ المضروبِ حملتْ حليمةُ الحقيبةَ قاصدة حمّامَ سيدي عبد القادر . وصادف أن كانت ساحةُ باب سويقة تعجّ برجال الشرطة المُدَجَّجين بالسلاح ؛ فقبل قليلٍ فرّقت الشرطةُ مظاهرةً وطنيّةً . وقبضوا على خمسة من الوطنيين .

وتقدّمت حليمةُ تعبُرُ الساحة في شجاعةٍ وضَبطِ أعصاب . وفي وسط الساحة أوقفها شرطي ، شاكي السلاح . فانتهرها بفظاظةٍ ، وأمرها بالعودة . لكنّها أجابته بلهجة متزنة وقالت له :

ـ أنا ذاهبةٌ إلى حمّام « سيدي عبد القادر » في زنقة الكبدة . وليس لي طريقٌ غير هذا .

فسمح لها الشرطي بالمرور ، وهو يَزمجِرُ بكلمات لم تفهَم لها مدلولا . ووصلت إلى الحمّام وأدّت مأمورتَها بغاية الدقّة حسب تعليمات عبد الحميد . وهي تعتقد أنها قامت بمغامرةٍ وطنيةٍ . ولكن سرّ المغامرة لم تعرِفهُ حليمةُ .

Sailing on boats of sticks and straw

In a storm at sea, most people would choose to be in a large ship. They would feel most safe in a steel vessel that could hold back the waves. Thor Heyerdahl would not. He prefers a more natural kind of boat—one built of sticks and straw. There is a series of stories of adventure in his relationship to these simple boats.

Thor Heyerdhal, a Norwegian, is a famous adventurer. He is both anthropologist and an author. Like other scientists who study people and society, he has written books about different groups of people and the spread of their cultures. He also goes further. He actually tests his theories.

In 1947, Heyerdhal and five companions left the western coast of South America on a raft. This flat bed of logs that were roped together was built of local light wood. It was built like the rafts used by the Andes in Peru. The purpose of the trip was to prove that people from South America a thousand years ago could have traveled on a raft to the pacific islands.

In 1960, Heyerdhal and his friends built a ship in Egypt. They used material like straw from te tall plants that grow along the edges of rivers. The ship, called the Ra, sailed the Mediterranean toward America. Unfortunately, the crew of the boat had to abandon the ship as the bundles of straw began to fall apart. A year later, the Ra-2 successfully completed the trip from Morocco to Barbados. In this way, Heyerdhal proved that people thousands of years ago could have made the same journey.

Tandis que les enfants couraient avec des cris de joie, que des groupes se formaient et s'éparpillaient à travers bois, Meaulnes s'avança, dans une allée, où, dix pas devant lui, marchait la jeune fille. Il se trouva près d'elle sans avoir eu le temps de réfléchir :

« Vous êtes belle », dit-il simplement.

Mais elle hâta le pas et, sans répondre, prit une allée transversale. D'autres promeneurs couraient, jouaient à travers les avenues, chacun errant à sa guise, conduit seulement par sa libre fantaisie. Le jeune homme se reprocha vivement ce qu'il appelait sa balourdise, sa grossièreté, sa sottise. Il errait au hasard, persuadé qu'il ne reverrait plus cette gracieuse créature, lorsqu'il l'aperçut soudain venant à sa rencontre et forcée de passer près de lui dans l'étroit sentier. Elle écartait de ses deux mains nues les plis de son grand manteau. Elle avait des souliers noirs très découverts. Ses chevilles étaient si fines qu'elles pliaient par instants et qu'on craignait de les voir se briser.

Cette fois, le jeune homme salua, en disant très bas :

« Voulez-vous me pardonner?

— Je vous pardonne, dit-elle gravement. Mais il faut que je rejoigne les enfants, puisqu'ils sont les maîtres aujourd'hui. Adieu. »

Alain-Fournier, *Le grand Meaulnes* (1913)