

國 立 清 華 大 學 命 題 紙

98 學年度 外國語文學 系(所) 甲 組碩士班入學考試

科目 英文 科目代碼 3804 共 3 頁第 1 頁 *請在【答案卷卡】內作答

Part I (50%)

Instructions: Read the following passage and answer the questions as directed.

The fact that a work of the highest artistic merit, such as *Madame Bovary*, was brought to trial was a cause of some surprise at the time, and more recent reactions have often been similar. Yet this fact should not, at least in one sense, occasion surprise. For a “great” work of art may be a contestatory and partially subversive force in ways that cannot be fully accounted for in terms of its presumed deviance from existing moral or legal norms. I shall try to argue that the trial attempts to process exclusively as ordinary crime—crime involving standard forms of deviation from established norms or values—what may in some sense be “ideological” or political crime—“crime” that places in question the very grounds of the trial itself. In other words, the text may raise radical doubts about the validity of important norms and categories in the context which is common to its world and the ordinary world which is the setting for the trial of its author. It must, however, be acknowledged that the nature of “ideological crime” conveyed by a novel is difficult to define even outside the context of a trial, for the political and social protest at issue does not fall squarely within established categories of either ordinary deviance (for example, theft) or subversion (for example, treason or armed rebellion).

The type of “ideological crime” in which a novel may be implicated involves the use of language. A regime based on censorship is not constrained by the rules that operate in a polity legally recognizing civil liberties. But the questions raised by Flaubert’s trial tend to transcend or to undercut this important consideration, for they would also raise difficulties with respect to more conventional tests concerning freedom of speech and of the press. (These questions came to a head with reference to the family, religion, and the status of the narrative subject.) In general, the use of language has a problematic relation to the distinction between thought and action, and the complex problems it generates induce a displacement of attention onto narrower and more easily negotiable considerations (for example, that of whether a novel serves “prurient” or “lascivious” interests or has “redeeming social value”). The use of language is a practice mutually related to other practices in culture and society. And significant changes in it may be related to social and cultural issues in ways that give “stylistic” innovations a political significance, thus taking them beyond the range of purely “formal” concern. Perhaps the largest question related to these issues—one that is pertinent to the reading of *Madame Bovary* at Flaubert’s trial but that also goes beyond it to engage broader interpretative matters—is the extent to which the novel conforms to (or is symptomatic of) its context, is critical of it, and initiates processes that cannot be contained within the categories of the symptomatic and the critical but are nonetheless bound up with sociocultural transformation in its most comprehensive sense. -----Dominick LaCapra

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科 目 英文 科 目 代 碼 3804 共 3 頁 第 二 頁 *請 在 【 答 案 卷 卡 】 內 作 答

1. Summarize the main ideas of the entire passage in your own words (around 200 words in length). (20%)
2. Write a critical response to the passage above in your own opinion on the relate issues of censorship and the great work of art. Analyze the type of “ideological crime” implicated in censorship. Use specific reasons and examples to support your statement. (30%)

Part II (50%)

Instructions: Read the following passage and answer the questions as directed.

Building a truly civilized society required all human beings to fulfill their God-given potential. Thus far, (Mary) Wollstonecraft judged—echoing a host of critics—her own sex had shown little sign of this. Modernisers who believed otherwise, who praised women’s elevating social influence, were dismissed as gallant sentimentalists. Women’s artificial manners, corrupt morals, and luxurious tastes made them an insidiously anti-progressive force. Whether this injurious role was a residue of the uncivilized past or a function of the civilizing *per se* was left unspecified by most critics. In Wollstonecraft’s writings, the emphasis tended to be placed on the recidivist elements in women’s behaviour and social status; but her conviction that a further stage of civilized progress was yet to come meant that the denunciation of the female condition as a ‘gothic’ relic could as easily apply to contemporary society (‘partial civilization’) as to preceding ages.

To a modern reader, what is so striking about these criticisms is their remoteness from any lived female experience. In Wollstonecraft’s writings, as in most eighteen-century works on feminine manners, modern Woman is a figure of sensational unreality. A preening narcissist, obsessed with appearance and fashion; a voluptuous hedonist, wallowing in sybaritic excess; an enervated emotionalist, strung out on frail nerves and overwrought sensibilities: the pages of *(A Vindication of) the Rights of Woman* (1792) are so crammed with caricatures like these that the reader, looking up from them, finds it hard to recall the more mundane reality, that in 1792 the vast majority of British women were not rich dilettantes but poor women who spent their days labouring in field or home, tending their children, worrying about bread prices, rents, unwanted pregnancies. Wollstonecraft knew this too, yet it was to be some years before the shadow cast by emblematic Woman over her writings began to fade. Thus, in her history of the French Revolution, apart from some stock-radical criticisms of female influence in the Bourbon regime, she has virtually nothing to say about the lives and experiences of French women, despite having lived among them for nearly two years. Similarly, American women, praised in the *Analytical Review* for the frank openness of their manners, otherwise appear only as the epitome of what she came to regard—thanks mostly to Imlay (her American husband then)—as a particularly nasty commercial society. As ‘the land of liberty and

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vulgar aristocracy, seated on her bags of dollars', America, she wrote, displayed a 'national character' unique in human history: 'a head enthusiastically enterprising, with cold selfishness of heart'. And for the prototype of this cold selfishness, she offered the women of the American cities, whose prudery, ignorance, ostentation and chilly frivolity were such as to throw 'leaden fetters on their charms'. On the other hand, travelling across Scandinavia she carefully documented female working conditions, marital lives, and cultural habits. 'Still harping on the same subject, you will exclaim—'she wrote to Imlay, as she reported on the sexual exploitation of lower-class Danish women, 'How can I avoid it, when most of the struggles of an eventful life have been occasioned by the oppressed state of my sex...'

Wollstonecraft's difficulty in dragging this 'same subject' out from under the weight of symbol constructions of femininity was at its most acute when she turned to the question of civic rights. The status of women in political life was not a new concern in the late eighteenth century. Political thinkers of all stripes had previously addressed the issue, but in discourses so dominated by feminine stereotypes that actual women went virtually unnoticed. The 1790s was a critical moment in this regard. Caught up on a wave of revolutionary hope, women acquired new political expectations and new platforms from which to express them. Emblematic Woman came face to face with the female citizen, a novel political phenomenon, and feminism took on a new character and militancy. The final chapters explore this development; but first let us return to Wollstonecraft's social world to meet some of the other women—feminist and non-feminist—involved in 1790s radicalism.

-----Barbara Taylor

1. Translate the **last paragraph** of the passage above from English into Chinese. (20%)
2. Discuss the historical significance of Mary Wollstonecraft in the political and socio-cultural context of the late eighteenth century. (30%)