

## 96 學年度碩士班甄試入學考試

## 【筆試試題】

共 4 頁

**Directions:**

Choose only ONE of the two questions below. Answer the question in essay form. Include a *thesis statement* in your introduction. In the body of the essay, support your thesis with *discussion and analysis of specific examples*. Be sure to respond directly to the question that you choose. Your essay will be evaluated for the quality of the argument *as it pertains to the question*.

1. Analyze the form, content, historical context, social significance, cultural (including gender) politics, or anything else that enables you to read meaning into the following passage. Focus on the passage, but don't just summarize it. Brief biographical and publication information is given. Note, however, that the author's identity and work cited are not in themselves vital to answer this question. DO NOT, in other words, write an essay on the writer and his writing.

The author is Ernest Hemmingway and the passage is taken from the beginning of his story, "Big Two-Hearted River" (1924). The author (like the protagonist, Nick) was white, male, born in the U.S., grew up with money (his father was a doctor) during a positive and hopeful period in U.S. history (for those with money), and served in World War I. Having survived the war, Hemmingway had a successful career, including a Nobel Prize for writing literature that was not at all hopeful. In 1961 he committed suicide. The story is set in a remote area of the north central U.S. where Nick spent much of his youth, and which he visits after returning from the war in Europe.

There was no town, nothing but the rails and the burned-over country. The thirteen saloons that had lined the one street of Seney had not left a trace. The foundations of the Mansion House hotel stuck up above the ground. The stone was chipped and split by the fire. It was all that was left of the town of Seney. Even the surface had been burned off the ground.

Nick looked at the burned-over stretch of hillside, where he had expected to find the scattered houses of the town and then walked down the railroad track to the bridge over the river. The river was there. It swirled against the log spires of the bridge. Nick looked down into the clear, brown water, colored from the pebbly bottom, and watched the trout keeping themselves steady in the current with wavering fins. As he watched them they changed their again by quick angles, only to hold steady in the fast water again. Nick watched them a long time.

He watched them holding themselves with their noses into the current, many trout in deep, fast moving water, slightly distorted as he watched far down through the glassy convex surface of the pool its surface pushing and swelling smooth against the resistance of the log-driven piles of the bridge. At the bottom of the pool were the big trout. Nick did not see them at first. Then he saw them at the bottom of the



pool, big trout looking to hold themselves on the gravel bottom in a varying mist of gravel and sand, raised in spurts by the current.

Nick looked down into the pool from the bridge. It was a hot day. A kingfisher flew up the stream. It was a long time since Nick had looked into a stream and seen trout. They were very satisfactory. As the shadow of the kingfisher moved up the stream, a big trout shot upstream in a long angle, only his shadow marking the angle, then lost his shadow as he came through the surface of the water, caught the sun, and then, as he went back into the stream under the surface, his shadow seemed to float down the stream with the current unresisting, to his post under the bridge where he tightened facing up into the current.

Nick's heart tightened as the trout moved. He felt all the old feeling. He turned and looked down the stream. It stretched away, pebbly-bottomed with shallows and big boulders and a deep pool as it curved away around the foot of a bluff.



2. In the following you will read two poems. The first is by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the other by his sister Christina Rossetti. The identities of the poets do not necessarily affect the poetic identities of the poems. As you can gather from the poems, there is nonetheless connection between the two poems in more than one way. Try to interpret the following poems as a whole in terms of the following three linked questions. Please note that you need to answer all questions:

- 1) What are the crucial religious, aesthetic, and gender issues treated in the two poems? You will not necessarily see all of these issues appear all of the poems so you need to decide for yourself which issues appear in which poem.
- 2) In what way does the connection between the two poems affect our understanding of the themes of the poems?
- 3) Based on the result of the first two questions, try to reach a conclusion as to which of the two poem is more interesting theoretically speaking to you personally. Explain your choice.

When you answer the above questions, you should write in such a way that they form a coherent and unified essay. Your discussions should be directly relevant to the questions raised here and you should make a point in supporting your answer with sufficient textual evidence.

### Poem 1

#### My Sister's Sleep

She fell asleep on Christmas Eve.  
At length the long-ungranted shade  
Of weary eyelids overweighed  
The pain nought else might yet relieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day  
Over the bed from chime to chime,  
Then raised herself for the first time,  
And as she sat her down, did pray.

Her little worktable was spread  
With work to finish. For the glare  
Made by her candle, she had care  
To work some distance from her bed.

...  
Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling years  
Heard in each hour, crept off; and then  
The ruffled silence spread again,  
Like water that a pebble stirs.

Our mother rose from where she sat;  
Her needles, as she laid them down,  
Met lightly, her silken gown  
Settled—no other noise than that.

"Glory onto the Newly Born!"  
So, as said angels, she did say,



Because we were in Christmas Day.  
Though it would still be long till morn.

Just then in the room over us  
There was a pushing back of chairs,  
As some who had sat unawares  
So late, now heard the hour, and rose.

With anxious softly-stepping haste  
Our mother went where Margaret lay,  
Fearing the sounds o'erheard—should they  
Have broken her long watched-for rest!

She stooped an instant, calm, and turned,  
But suddenly turned back again;  
And all her features seemed in pain  
With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

For my part, I but hid my face,  
And held my breath, and spoke no word.  
There was none spoken; but I heard  
The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept;  
And both my arms fell, and I said,  
"God knows I knew that she was dead."  
And here, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn  
A little after twelve o'clock,  
We said, ere the first quarter struck,  
"Christ's blessing on the newly born!"

## Poem 2

### After Death

The curtains were half drawn, the floor was swept  
And strewn with rushes, rosemary and may  
Lay thick upon the bed on which I lay,  
Where thro' the lattice ivy-shadows crept.  
He leaned above me, thinking that I slept  
And could not hear him; but I heard him say:  
"Poor child, poor child": and as he turned away  
Came a deep silence, and I knew he wept.  
He did not touch the shroud, or raise the fold  
That hid m face, or take my hand in his,  
Or ruffle the smooth pillows for my head:  
He did not love me living; but once dead  
He pitied me; and very sweet it is  
To know he still is warm tho' I am cold.