

CAPES/CAFEP EXTERNE D'ANGLAIS SESSION 2017

EPREUVE DE MISE EN SITUATION PROFESSIONNELLE

Première partie :

Vous procéderez à la présentation, à l'étude et à la mise en relation des trois documents proposés (A, B, C non hiérarchisés).

Deuxième partie :

Cette partie de l'épreuve porte sur les documents A et B.

A partir de ces supports, vous définirez des objectifs communicationnels, culturels et linguistiques pouvant être retenus dans une séquence pédagogique en classe de cycle terminal, en vous référant aux programmes. En vous appuyant sur la spécificité de ces supports, vous dégagerez des stratégies pour développer les compétences de communication des élèves.

Document A



Aubrey Beardsley, "The Peacock skirt", illustration for Oscar Wilde's *Salomé* (1896)

Document B

Of Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told
(The witch he loved before the gift of Eve,
That, ere the snake's, her sweet tongue could deceive,
And her enchanted hair was the first gold.
5 And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
And, subtly of herself contemplative,
Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave,
Till heart and body and life are in its hold.

The rose and poppy are her flowers; for where
10 Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent
And soft-shed kisses and soft sleep shall snare?
Lo! as that youth's eyes burned at thine, so went
Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck bent
And round his heart one strangling golden hair

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Body's Beauty", 1868

Document C

*The play takes place in the summer of 1940 in a rather rustic and very Bohemian hotel, the Costa Verde, which, as its name implies, sits on a jungle-covered hilltop overlooking the 'caleta', or 'morning beach' of Puerto Barrio in Mexico. But this is decidedly not the Puerto Barrio of today. At that time—twenty years ago—the west coast of Mexico had not yet become
5 the Las Vegas and Miami Beach of Mexico. The villages were still predominantly primitive Indian villages, and the still-water morning beach of Puerto Barrio and the rain forests above it were among the world's wildest and loveliest populated places. The setting for the play is the wide verandah of the hotel. (...)*

ACT ONE

10 *As the curtain rises, there are sounds of a party of excited female tourists arriving by bus on the road down the hill below the Costa Verde Hotel, Mrs Maxine Faulk, the proprietor of the hotel, comes round the turn of the verandah. She is a stout, swarthy woman in her middle forties—affable and rapaciously lusty. She is wearing a pair of levis and a blouse that is half unbuttoned. She is followed by Pedro, a Mexican of about twenty—slim and attractive. He is
15 an employee in the hotel and also her casual lover. Pedro is stuffing his shirt under the belt of his pants and sweating as if he had been working hard in the sun. Mrs Faulk looks down the hill and is pleased by the sight of someone coming up from the tourist bus below.*

MAXINE [*calling out*]: Shannon! [*A man's voice from below answers: 'Hi!'*] Hah! [*Maxine always laughs with a single harsh, loud bark, opening her mouth like a seal expecting a
20 fish to be thrown to it.*] My spies told me that you were back under the border! [*to Pedro*]
Anda, hombre, anda!

[Maxine's delight expands and vibrates in her as Shannon labours up the hill to the hotel. He does not appear on the jungle path for a minute or two after the shouting between them starts.]

25 MAXINE: Hah! My spies told me you went through Saltillo last week with a busload of women—a whole busload of females, all females, hah! How many you laid so far? Hah!

SHANNON *[from below, panting]*: Great Caesar's ghost... stop... shouting!

MAXINE: No wonder your ass is draggin', hah!

SHANNON: Tell the kid to help me up with this bag.

30 MAXINE *[shouting directions]*: Pedro! Anda—la maleta. Pancho, no seas flojo! Va y trae el equipaje del señor. *[Pancho, another young Mexican, comes around the verandah and trots down the jungle path, Pedro has climbed up a coconut tree with a machete and is chopping down nuts for rum-cocos.]*

SHANNON *[shouting, below]*: Fred? Hey, Fred!

35 MAXINE *[with a momentary gravity]*: Fred can't hear you, Shannon. *[She goes over and picks up a coconut, shaking it against her ear to see if it has milk in it.]*

SHANNON *[still below]*: Where is Fred—gone fishing?

40 *[Maxine lops the end off a coconut with a machete, as Pancho trots up to the verandah with Shannon's bag—a beat-up Gladstone covered with travel stickers from all over the world. Then Shannon appears, in a crumpled white linen suit. He is panting, sweating, and wild-eyed. About thirty-five, Shannon is 'black Irish'. His nervous state is terribly apparent; he is a young man who has cracked up before and is going to crack up again—perhaps repeatedly.]*

MAXINE: Well! Lemme look at you!

45 SHANNON: Don't look at me; get dressed!

MAXINE: Gee, you look like you had it!

SHANNON: You look like you've been having it, too. Get dressed!

MAXINE: Hell, I'm dressed. I never dress in September. Don't you know I never dress in September?

50 SHANNON: Well, just, just—button your shirt up.

MAXINE: How long you been off it, Shannon?

SHANNON: Off what?

MAXINE: The wagon...

SHANNON: Hell, I'm dizzy with fever. Hundred and three this morning in Cuernavaca.

55 MAXINE: Whatcha got wrong with you?

SHANNON: Fever... fever... Where's Fred?

MAXINE: Dead.

SHANNON: Did you say *dead*?

MAXINE: That's what I said. Fred is dead.

60 SHANNON: How?

MAXINE: Less'n two weeks ago, Fred cut his hand on a fish-hook, it got infected, infection got in his blood stream, and he was dead inside of forty-eight hours. *[To Pancho]* Vete!

SHANNON: Holy smoke...

MAXINE: I can't quite realize it yet...

65 SHANNON: You don't seem—inconsolable about it.

MAXINE: Fred was an old man, baby. Ten years older'n me. We hadn't had sex together in...

SHANNON: What's that got to do with it?

MAXINE: Lie down and have a rum-coco.

70 SHANNON: No, no. I want a cold beer. If I start drinking rum-cocos now I won't stop drinking rum-cocos. So Fred is dead? I looked forward to lying in this hammock and talking to Fred.

MAXINE: Well, Fred's not talking now, Shannon. A diabetic gets a blood infection, he goes like that without a decent hospital in less'n a week. *[A bus horn s heard blowing from below.]* Why don't your busload of women come on up here? They're blowing the bus horn down there.

75 SHANNON: Let 'em blow it, blow it... [...] Are they getting out of the bus or are they staying in it, the stingy—daughters of—bitches.... Schoolteachers at a Baptist Female College in Blowing Rock, Texas. Eleven, eleven of them.

MAXINE: A football squad of old maids....

SHANNON: Yeah, and I'm the football.

Tennessee Williams, *The Night of the Iguana*, 1961

5.2.4 – Exemples de sujets

Les sujets traités dans cette partie se trouvent en partie 6 – Annexes de ce rapport.

EMSP 13

Première partie en anglais

Le sujet portait sur la construction du mythe de la « femme fatale », depuis la figure de Lilith (qui apparaît dans le Talmud, puis plus largement dans le folklore médiéval juif) jusqu'au mythe de Salomé (reprise du Nouveau Testament par Wilde). Le troisième document, extrait de *Night of the Iguana*, invitait à reconnaître les résurgences de cette figure de la femme dans un texte plus moderne, sans que l'ancrage dans un mythe soit explicite.

Les difficultés du dossier résidaient dans l'articulation de la réflexion avec le document C et l'identification de traditions littéraires et esthétiques distinctes : l'esthétisme de Wilde et l'Art nouveau de Beardsley permettaient d'éclairer le document A, le poème du plus connu des Préraphaélites reprenait une certaine idée de la femme développée par ce mouvement artistique, et enfin le théâtre de Tennessee Williams invitait à étudier le dossier plus directement sous l'angle de l'érotisme.

Certains candidats ont pu hésiter à aller au-delà d'une étude de la sensualité pour s'aventurer dans l'érotisme. Les bonnes prestations ont su lier ces deux notions, et proposer une étude fine du symbolisme très fort des documents, éclairé par des connaissances de l'histoire littéraire et artistique dans lesquelles ces documents venaient s'ancrer. Elles ont également su aller au-delà d'une perception binaire du dossier (femme dominante / homme dominé) et analyser plus finement les différentes figures féminines qui sous-tendent les documents.

Les candidats pouvaient articuler leurs analyses à plusieurs notions du programme, par exemple : « lieux et formes du pouvoir » (*the construction of the female subject as a disruptive erotic power over men*) ou « mythes et héros » (*the resistance of the myth of the female demon*). Une thématique au programme en classe de LELE était également envisageable : « le personnage, ses figures, ses avatars » (*the development of the figure of the dark woman*) ou « la rencontre avec l'autre, l'amour, l'amitié » (*love and domination*).

Présentation des documents

Document A is an original illustration by Aubrey Beardsley of *Salomé*, a one-act play by Oscar Wilde, published in 1896. Wilde's work is a reworking of the Biblical myth of Salomé, who famously failed to seduce John the Baptist (called Iokanaan in the play), and sought revenge by claiming his head to King Herod, who held him captive. The illustration offered is from the opening pages of the play and shows Salomé and the Young Syrian, the captain of the guard, whom she seduces to have the privilege to talk to Iokanaan. (The candidates were informed that the character on the right is a male character, to avoid any unfortunate confusion.)

Document B is a sonnet by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The poem celebrates the power of Lilith, Adam's first wife, who was born from the same earth as him as an equal, but soon refused his sexual domination and chose exile from the divine paradise. She has become a popular figure of the transgressive, independent woman.

Document C is the opening of *Night of the Iguana*, a play written by Tennessee Williams. A man struggles out of the jungle and up to reach the "verandah" where Maxine, the owner of the hotel there, is expecting him, "like a seal expecting a fish to be thrown to it" (lines 19-20). Maxine is highly sexualized, and tries to tempt the poor feverish wretch – pursued by a "whole busload of women" (lines 24-25) into having a rum-coco.

Proposition d'analyse

Those three texts stage the construction of a literary stereotype, the *femme fatale*, originating in early religious conceptions of the female temptress. Rossetti's poem opens on the idea of creation of a legend, of a tale that is passed on from generation to generation: "Of Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told" (B, line 1). The thrice-told tale offered by the documents finely draws the voluptuous lines of a Protean woman metamorphosing from an enchanting goddess into an erotic *femme fatale*.

[I- Sensuality]

[1- Female attributes]

In keeping with the Aesthetic stance that values beauty and artifice over truth and morality, the woman is first presented as a beautiful seducer. Rossetti's poem brings the focus, in the tradition of the blazon, to the natural female attributes of seduction: her hair ("her enchanted hair was the first gold", l.4), her eyes (l.12), the perfume and kisses that she dispenses lavishly around ("shed scent / And soft-

shed kisses", ll.10-11). The charms of Beardsley's Salomé lie in her elaborate skirt and headdress of stylised peacock feathers. The *Art nouveau* aesthetic presents very complex designs, inspired by Japanese print and floral designs. Salomé is a work of art as the woman disappears behind embellishing decorations.

[2- Symbolic evocations]

Female seduction is also revealed through metaphoric and symbolic associations. Aubrey Beardsley dons Salomé with a mesmerizing peacock skirt. Her association with the vain bird is pursued in her crown of heart-shaped peacock feathers and the medallion included on the left of the illustration, where the peacock appears as the true emblem of the woman. Lilith, in document B, is associated more traditionally with flowers, the Romantic symbol of beauty and fragility (*"The rose and poppy are her flowers"*, l.9). These webs of symbolic connections bring the focus on "Body's Beauty" (which is the title of the poem) as the true source of the female power of seduction and fascination.

[3- Nature and artifice]

The ambiguous interplay between natural and artificial beauty is further explored in *The Night of the Iguana*. Maxine is tightly connected to her environment, as the play opens on stage directions leading us from the jungle to the verandah. Place and people merge as the luxuriance of the "*rain forests*" contaminates "*the world's wildest and loveliest populated places*". The "*wide verandah*" is a natural platform for the birth of Maxine, a modern Venus emerging from her giant shell in scant clothing. Yet the association of Salomé with the peacock opens up a new perspective on the female seductive powers. As a favourite symbol for the Aesthetic movement, the peacock encapsulates the vanity of a natural phenomenon, the paradox of a natural yet artificial beauty. The woman is constructed as a beautiful being, whose natural seduction is enhanced by artifice.

[II- Temptation]

[1- The trap]

The female body works as a weapon that she can apply to the male victim. Salomé's peacock dress literally engulfs the helpless Young Syrian. The many curves of the painting precipitate back to the central focal point of the illustration, the train of the skirt. The circular pattern is reminiscent of the characteristic motifs on peacock feathers, which inspired many symbolic associations with eyes (according to Ovid, Argos's eyes were transferred to the train of a peacock by Hera before he was killed by Zeus, so that he could continue keeping guard on her). Centripetal traps are also alluded to in the metaphor of the spider web in Rossetti's poem (*"Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave, / Till heart and body and life are in its hold"*, l.7-8). The wilderness in the opening of Williams's play projects a similar movement from outside to inside, as the encroaching jungle directs Shannon's steps up to the verandah at the hilltop. The opening in the forest is further reminiscent of the motif of the eye. "*Maxine's delight expands and vibrates in her*" as she contemplates the approach of her next victim from her watching tower.

[2- The female poison]

Maxine's hardly dissimulated nudity is her true weapon and acts as a spell on Shannon. His nervousness, made explicit by the stage directions (ll.40-43), is echoed in his desperate plea for Maxine to "*get dressed*" (l.45, l.47, l.50). Temptation is explored through metaphorical references to the Biblical

snake and its cajoling words (*“ere the snake’s, her sweet tongue could deceive”*, document B, l.3; *“Lie down and have a rum-coco”*, document C, l.68). The rum-coco is a modern venom but the representation of temptation is similar to that of the Christian myth, as the woman tries and tempts the man into committing what he knows to be forbidden (*“No, no. I want a cold beer. If I start drinking rum-cocos now I won’t stop drinking rum-cocos”*, ll.69-70). His resistance is bound to fail: he will succumb like Fred did to her infection. The *“fish-hook”* that brought the contamination to her recently deceased husband is evocative of the metaphorical representation of Maxine as a *“seal expecting a fish to be thrown to it”* (ll. 19-20), or a predator (*“rapaciously lusty”*, l.13). Lilith’s *“enchanted hair”* (document B, l.4) also takes on a more disquieting hue as magic turns to dark powers with the reference to the witch (l.2). Salomé’s conniving position is also evocative of the sweet words that her snake tongue pours into the guard’s ear, and her menacing eyes and protruding chin turn the princess with the peacock skirt into a witch in disguise.

[3- Female empowerment]

The victorious temptress envelops (document A), corners (Shannon *“has cracked up before and is going to crack up again – perhaps repeatedly”*, ll.42-43), and eventually destroys her male victims. The progression of the poem leads from seduction in the first stanza to a catastrophic destruction through fire (*“that youth’s eyes burned at thine”*, l.13) and *“strangling”*, where one *“golden hair”*, previously enchanted, turns to a deathly slipknot. The power relations between the *femme fatale* and her younger victims are echoed in the production of Maxine as a masculine character, *“a stout, swarthy woman in her middle forties”* (ll.12-13) who *“laughs with a single harsh, loud bark”* (l.19). Notions of femininity and masculinity are reassigned, as can be seen in the names chosen by Tennessee Williams for his characters, as well as in the *Art nouveau* aesthetics of document A, presenting a highly feminized Young Syrian, in keeping with Wilde’s dandy posture blurring the distinction between male and female.

[III- Eros and Thanatos]

[1- Exoticism and eroticism]

The female weapon is thus reshaped from sensual charms to an erotic power that literally stifles the male figures. Salomé’s power connects exoticism and eroticism through Beardsley’s aesthetics. Mexico, in the extract from the play, is an uncouth, primitive world, a violent jungle where one has to walk with a machete to keep control. Maxine and Pedro, her young mute lover are both engaged in a violent relationship with their environment as they repeatedly *“cho[p] down nuts for rum-cocos”* (ll.32-33, l.38). Shannon fails to fence himself against the contaminating forces of the heat and the wilderness as he appears infected, *“panting, sweating, and wild-eyed”* (l.40-41) and *“dizzy with fever”* (l.54). The verandah is an isolated place of rest (*“I looked forward to lying in this hammock”*, l.70), cut off from the dangers of its wild surroundings. This evocation of the Garden of Eden projects us into the prelapsarian world evoked by the myth of Lilith: a world that predates the original sin, and thus any concept of immorality. Maxine literally exudes primitive erotic power as her *“delight expands and vibrates in her”* (l.23) when she recognizes Shannon. She is burning with sexual desire (she *“look[s] like [she’s] been having it”*, l.47) and always precipitates the conversation back to sex, despite Shannon’s pathetic attempts at talking about anything else (about Fred for instance). The flower imagery mentioned in the poem also contributes to suggesting the perverse effect of exoticism: the rose is an emblem of passion, and the poppy of rest, sleep and death.

[2- Castrating power]

The femme fatale is a female demon, modelled after the original figure of Lilith. Her erotic force turns to castrating power as she dislocates the youth's neck (document B, l.13) and appropriates his heart. Shannon is deprived of any masculine energy as Maxine handles craftily a machete and "*lops the end off a coconut with a machete*" (l.38). The poor man's identity is reduced to the rotundity of his chopped-off self when he eventually turns into the "*football*" (l.79) that females would toy with (the female power disseminates from one figure to an ever-expanding class of demons with the "*football squad of old maids*").

[3- The figure of the whore]

The erotic force of the woman eventually engulfs and swallows the man. Salomé's position is evocative of the bite of the Praying Mantis, a highly ironical suggestion as the entire story is that of the opposition between Iokanaan and Salomé, or Christian faith versus erotic temptation. Lilith also stands for female empowerment over man and God's rule as she asserts her identity in reaction against man's sexual domination. Those three documents challenge morality as the implicit cultural construction that emerges is that of the whore, most perfectly embodied by Maxine, whose gaping mouth, on a "wide verandah" in the luxurious female forest, is metaphorically evocative of a vagina.

[Conclusion]

The construction of the figure of the *femme fatale* is a continuation of early myths and traditions. It takes from the literary convention of courtly poetry celebrating the fair lady, but the sage and quiet Eve is soon transformed into a more ambiguous female figure, a temptress and a predator. The burning eyes of Lilith as well as Shannon's reluctance to "*look*" at Maxine (l.61-67) draw a complex web of religious, cultural and mythological resonances in the construction of those female Medusas.

Cécile BERTRAND

Seconde partie en français

La seconde partie de l'épreuve portait sur les documents A et B. Il s'agissait pour les candidats de proposer une exploitation pédagogique de ces documents selon le programme du cycle terminal en identifiant « des objectifs communicationnels, culturels et linguistiques ». Le candidat devait tout d'abord s'appliquer à définir la situation d'enseignement, à savoir la classe choisie et la notion retenue. Le niveau visé en cycle terminal est B2 pour la LVO (toutes séries), mais la séquence pédagogique pouvait également être envisagée pour un niveau C1 qui est celui de l'enseignement de spécialité LVA en terminale L. Le candidat devait justifier son choix et articuler sa séquence et les activités proposées autour d'une des quatre notions de l'entrée culturelle « Gestes fondateurs et mondes en mouvement ». Ainsi, la notion de « Mythes et héros » permettait d'envisager un travail pertinent sur les mythes revisités ou encore sur la vocation - ou non - de l'art à briser les mythes. De même que la notion « Lieux et Formes du pouvoir » donnait la possibilité aux candidats de réfléchir sur la séduction comme piège fatal ou encore sur la femme prédatrice. Au vu de la nature littéraire du document B, de ses nombreuses références symboliques et de l'importance de l'implicite, il était également envisageable de proposer une exploitation des deux documents en cours de Littérature étrangère en langue étrangère (LELE), enseignement obligatoire en classes de première et terminale littéraires. Ainsi, la thématique « Le personnage, ses figures, ses avatars » ouvrait la voie à une exploration fine sur la femme et l'imagerie

poétique ou encore sur la perpétuation de clichés sur la représentation de la femme. Enfin, « L'imaginaire » pouvait conduire à une réflexion sur le besoin et la nécessité de créer. Le jury accepte donc toute proposition dès lors qu'elle est justifiée et mène à une question claire qui permet de construire la séquence pédagogique et articule les objectifs définis. Les objectifs de la séquence ne pouvaient se limiter aux seuls objectifs pragmatique (construction du discours poétique) et méthodologique (étude de la composition d'une illustration). Il était attendu des candidats qu'ils identifient et analysent clairement les obstacles à la compréhension et qu'ils proposent de réelles stratégies d'accès au sens en lien avec leur problématique dans la notion retenue. Ainsi, les meilleurs candidats ont su adapter les objectifs linguistique et méthodologique au travail en LELE (l'objectif linguistique au service de la stylistique par exemple).

Sans que cela soit exigible, les candidats pouvaient proposer une tâche finale définissant l'orientation de la séquence en lien avec les activités langagières proposées. Un grand nombre de candidats ont proposé comme tâche une écriture poétique à la manière de Rossetti. Outre l'extrême difficulté d'une telle tâche, on peut s'interroger sur l'intérêt pédagogique de faire produire de tels textes à des élèves de Terminale, même littéraire. Les meilleurs candidats ont su exploiter l'aspect stylistique du poème dans d'autres contextes plus actionnels, tout en gardant à l'esprit les spécificités des épreuves du baccalauréat (LVO/ LVA ou LELE selon les choix émis).

Une fois ce cadre défini, il s'agissait de présenter les objectifs de la séquence guidant les activités et en accord avec l'orientation choisie. Sur ces deux documents, il était possible d'envisager divers objectifs culturels (le mouvement artistique « Préraphaélite » ou encore celui plus littéraire de « l'Esthétisme »), linguistiques (la syntaxe au service du discours poétique et de la thématisation, inversion d'arguments du verbe) et pragmatiques (si les tâches envisagées s'y prêtaient).

La consigne invitait à s'interroger sur la spécificité des supports proposés, ce qui conduisait à identifier le potentiel didactique des documents. Ainsi, les difficultés posées par le document B devaient être clairement identifiées : l'implicite, la symbolique, la spécificité du texte (sonnet). Des éléments facilitateurs étaient cependant envisageables, tels que les adjectifs, les anaphores ou encore les références explicites à Adam et Eve. Il en va de même pour le document A, même si dans ce dernier la symbolique (les courbes comme signifiant de l'envoûtement, le paon représentant la vanité) ou encore le culturel (difficulté de comprendre qui sont les personnages, la référence littéraire à *Salomé*) peuvent entraver la compréhension.

La hiérarchisation des documents devait être justifiée avec pertinence. L'illustration d'A. Beardsley, par sa charge symbolique et implicite, ne pouvait être utilisée mécaniquement comme déclencheur de parole, au risque d'une description simpliste de l'image. Le poème, même s'il présente lui aussi des difficultés d'accès au sens, semble offrir une entrée plus pertinente dans la séquence, pour peu qu'une anticipation cohérente soit envisagée.

Il s'agissait ensuite, en prenant appui sur les éléments facilitateurs décelés dans chaque document, d'envisager des pistes d'exploitation qui permettaient aux élèves de dépasser les difficultés inhérentes au poème et à l'image, et d'en accéder au sens.

Nous souhaitons rappeler aux futurs candidats qu'il leur est possible de proposer des documents supplémentaires qui permettraient de faire le lien entre les documents fournis, ou qui éclaireraient le projet pédagogique présenté. On pouvait penser ici, par exemple, à l'extrait de *Salomé* correspondant à l'illustration (pour vérifier les hypothèses avancées lors de l'exploitation de l'image), à d'autres illustrations de Beardsley sur la pièce, ou au tableau de Rossetti correspondant au poème. Selon les axes choisis pour la séance, il était possible de proposer des documents plus variés, comme la chanson *Femme Fatale* du Velvet Underground dans une séquence sur ce thème.

Le jury insiste à nouveau sur la nécessité de prendre en compte la préparation aux épreuves du baccalauréat dans les séquences destinées au cycle terminal. Pour cela, un candidat bien préparé

connaîtra très précisément les modalités des différentes épreuves de l'examen, condition *sine qua non* à un entraînement pertinent, menant à une utilisation autonome de la langue en contexte réel.

Guirec LE BIHAN et Julien MAGENTIE

EMSP 17

Première partie en anglais

The announcement, on the 13th of October, that Bob Dylan had been awarded the Nobel prize for literature came at the end of a particularly troubled year, that had evidenced a conservative backlash, what with Brexit and the nomination of Donald Trump as Republican candidate for presidency.

In that particular context, why Dylan's lyrics could be considered "new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition" thus never was much cause for concern: it is indeed a case of dramatic irony that while the times were obviously a-changin', the critics were too busy prophesizing with their pens to remember to keep their eyes wide open.

Document C is an instance of a conservative definition or redefinition of the field of literature in unsubstantiated times. While its defense of the canon is echoed in document A, the latter proves to be a rather hagiographic portrait of the new laureate and concludes with James Taylor hammering out that Bob Dylan deserves his prize. Document B, an example of Dylan's lyrics, stands as the corpus delicti.

Whether or not Dylan's lyrics are to be seriously construed as literature is obviously one of the questions raised by this corpus, but its focal point goes far beyond the iconic, indeed almost mythical figure of Dylan: the crux of the matter here is that the definition of literature is and has always been a political question more than a theoretical debate, since literature, and more generally art, depend on a canon, which itself is the result of a consensus and, prior to that, of a power game. As a result, the candidates were invited to go further back than October 13th 2016, on a trip down memory lane, back to the sixties and all the way down to the dawn of literature, in order to put the Nobel Committee's latest decision to the test.

To put it bluntly, the candidates took four different paths through and around the three documents, depending on which notion(s) from the curriculum they saw fit to associate to the corpus.

Let us first note that some candidates unfortunately still fail to connect their presentations with the curriculum, thereby dissociating the first and second part of the exercise. The jury strongly advises them to read the previous reports, in the course of their preparation. Let us also repeat that the notions in the curriculum appear in the French language and that, even though it has become a common practice, it is not necessarily relevant to translate them word for word, especially in the context of this exercise.

Myth-making

For instance, saying that the story of Bob Dylan illustrates the notion of "myths and heroes" was awkward, to say the least. Some candidates, who relied on document A, to point out that Bob Dylan had become "a giant", as Obama puts it, did try to show, thanks to evidence from documents B and C, that this evolution followed a number of metamorphoses, from a chubby and sulky peddler of ballads (A & B) into a fashionable, iconoclastic "electric" angry young man (A), from a traditional herald into a vitriolic critic of the critics (B), from "a song-and-dance man" (C), into "one of the greatest poets the US has ever produced" (C & B), from a contender for the Nobel Prize for literature 20 years in a row (C) into a Nobel laureate (A), from a hero of the counterculture (A) into a cultural icon (C). In that sense, the story of Bob