



ANGLO-CHINESE JUNIOR COLLEGE
Preliminary Examinations
Higher 1

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

8811/01

Paper 1 Reading Literature

29 August 2014

3 hours

Additional Materials: Answer Paper

Set texts may be taken into the examination room. They may bear underlining or highlighting. Any kind of folding or flagging of papers in texts (e.g. use of post-its, tape flags or paper clips) is not permitted.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your Centre number, index number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **three** questions, one from each of Sections A, B and C.

Begin each essay on a fresh sheet of paper.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

At the end of the examination, tie each essay separately.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

This document consists of **9** printed pages.



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Section A

1

Either (a) Write a critical commentary of the following poem, paying close attention to ways in which your response is shaped by the poet's language, style and form.

DARWIN'S FINCHES

1
My mother always called it a nest,
the multi-coloured mass harvested

from her six daughters' brushes,
and handed it to one of us

after she had shaped it, as we sat in front 5
of the fire drying our hair.

She said some birds steal anything, a strand
of spider's web, or horse's mane,

the residue of sheep's wool in the grasses 10
near a fold

where every summer of her girlhood
hundreds nested.

Since then I've seen it for myself, their genius—
how they transform the useless.

I've seen plastics stripped and whittled 15
into a brilliant straw,

and newspapers—the dates, the years—
supporting the underweavings.

2 20
As tonight in our bed by the window
you brush my hair to help me sleep, and clean

the brush as my mother did, offering
the nest to the updraft.

I'd like to think it will be lifted as far
as the river, and catch in some white sycamore,

or drift, too light to sink, into the shaded inlets, 25
the bank-moss, where small fish, frogs, and insects

lay their eggs.
Would this constitute an afterlife?

The story goes that sailors, moored for weeks
off islands they called *paradise*, 30

stood in the early sunlight
cutting their hair. And the rare

birds there, nameless, almost extinct,
came down around them

and cleaned the decks 35
and disappeared into the trees above the sea.

Deborah Digges (published 1986)

- Or (b) Write a critical commentary of the following poem, paying close attention to ways in which your response is shaped by the poet's language, style and form.

FLOWERS FROM A NEW LOVE AFTER THE DIVORCE

Cut back the stems an inch to keep in bloom.
 So instructs the florist's note
 enclosed inside the flowers.
 Who knew what was cut
 could heal again, the green wounds close,
 stitching themselves together? 5

It doesn't matter. The flowers, red
 and white, will bloom awhile, then wither.
 You sit in an unlit room and watch
 the vase throw crystal shadows through the dark. 10
 The flowers' colours are so lovely they're painful.
 In a week, you'll have to throw them out.

It's only hope that makes you take out scissors,
 separate each bloom and cut
 where you last measured. Did you know 15
 Venus was said to turn into a virgin
 each time she bathed? She did it
 as a mark of love. She did it

so as to please her lovers. Perhaps,
 overwhelmed by pain, 20
 she eventually stopped bathing
 altogether. It doesn't matter. It's a pleasure
 to feel the green nubs stripped, watch the stems
 refresh under your blade. They're here

because they're beautiful. They glow 25
 inside your crystal vase. And yet
 the flowers by themselves are nothing:
 only a refraction of colour that,
 in a week or two, will be thrown out.
 Day by day, the water lowers. The red- 30

and-white heads droop, blacken at the stems.
 It doesn't matter. Even cut stems heal.
 But what is the point of pain if it heals?
Some things should last forever, instructs
 the florist's note. *Pleasure*, 35
 says one god. *Shame*, says another.

Venus heads, they call these flowers.
 In a week or two, you'll lose the note,
 have to call the florist up.
With sympathy, you'll think he says. 40
 Perhaps: *With love*. It doesn't matter.
 You've stopped bathing. Alone,

you sit before the crystal
vase refracting you in pieces
through the dark. You watch
the pale skin bloom inside it, wither.
You petal, inch by inch.
You turn red and white together.

45

Paisley Rekdal (published 2012)

Section B

KAZUO ISHIGURO: *The Remains of the Day*

2

Either (a) 'The real story here is that of a man destroyed by the ideas upon which he has built his life.'

How far do you agree with this view of *The Remains of the Day*?

Or (b) Write a critical appreciation of the following passage, commenting on how far and how effectively it concludes the presentation of the relationship between Stevens and Miss Kenton in the novel.

I simply wondered if you were being ill-treated in some way. Forgive me, but as I say, it is something that has worried me for some time. I would feel foolish had I come all this way and seen you and not at least asked you.'

'Mr Stevens, there's no need to be so embarrassed. We're old friends, after all, are we not? In fact, I'm very touched you should be so concerned. And I can put your mind at rest on this matter absolutely. My husband does not mistreat me at all in any way. He is not in the least a cruel or ill-tempered man.'

5

'I must say, Mrs Benn, that does take a load from my mind.'

I leaned forward into the rain, looking for signs of the bus.

'I can see you are not very satisfied, Mr Stevens,' Miss Kenton said. 'Do you not believe me?'

10

'Oh, it's not that, Mrs Benn, not that at all. It's just that the fact remains, you do not seem to have been happy over the years. That is to say – forgive me – you have taken it on yourself to leave your husband on a number of occasions. If he does not mistreat you, then, well... one is rather mystified as to the cause of your unhappiness.'

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I looked out into the drizzle again. Eventually, I heard Miss Kenton say behind me: 'Mr Stevens, how can I explain? I hardly know myself why I do such things. But it's true, I've left three times now.' She paused a moment, during which time I continued to gaze out towards the fields on the other side of the road. Then she said: 'I suppose, Mr Stevens, you're asking whether or not I love my husband.'

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'Really, Mrs Benn, I would hardly presume...'

'I feel I should answer you, Mr Stevens. As you say, we may not meet again for many years. Yes, I do love my husband. I didn't at first. I didn't at first for a long time. When I left Darlington Hall all those years ago, I never realised I was really, truly leaving. I believe I thought of it as simply another ruse, Mr Stevens, to annoy you. It was a shock to come out here and find myself married. For a long time, I was very unhappy, very unhappy indeed. But then year after year went by, there was the war, Catherine grew up, and one day I realised I loved my husband. You spend so much time with someone, you find you get used to him. He's a kind, steady man, and yes, Mr Stevens, I've grown to love him.'

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30

Miss Kenton fell silent again for a moment. Then she went on:

'But that doesn't mean to say, of course, there aren't occasions now and then – extremely desolate occasions – when you think to yourself: "What a terrible mistake I've made with my life." And you get to thinking about a different life, a *better* life you might have had. For instance, I get to thinking about a life I might have had with you, Mr Stevens. And I suppose that's when I get angry over some trivial little thing and leave. But each time I do so, I realise before long – my rightful place is with my husband. After all, there's no turning back the

35

40

clock now. One can't be forever dwelling on what might have been. One should realise one has as good as most, perhaps better, and be grateful.'

I do not think I responded immediately, for it took me a moment or two to fully digest these words of Miss Kenton. Moreover, as you might appreciate, their implications were such as to provoke a certain degree of sorrow within me. Indeed – why should I not admit it? – at that moment, my heart was breaking.

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Day Six – Evening
Weymouth

Section C

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

3

Either (a) 'The title *Twelfth Night* indicates that revelry is in the foreground of the play.'

How far do you agree with this view of *Twelfth Night* as a comedy?

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, commenting on the dramatic function of humour here and elsewhere in the play.

- Feste:* Would you have a love song or a song of good life?
Sir Toby: A love song, a love song.
Sir Andrew: Ay, ay. I care not for good life.
 (Clown [*Feste*] sings)
 O mistress mine, where are you roaming? 5
 O stay and hear, your true love's coming,
 That can sing both high and low.
 Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
 Journeys end in lovers meeting,
 Every wise man's son doth know. 10
- Sir Andrew:* Excellent good, i'faith.
Sir Toby: Good, good.
Feste: [*Sings*] What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
 Present mirth hath present laughter;
 What's to come is still unsure. 15
 In delay there lies no plenty,
 Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty;
 Youth's a stuff will not endure.
- Sir Andrew:* A mellifluous voice, as I am true knight.
Sir Toby: A contagious breath. 20
Sir Andrew: Very sweet, and contagious, i'faith.
Sir Toby: To hear by the nose, it is dulcet in contagion. But shall we make
 the welkin dance indeed? Shall we rouse the night owl in a catch
 that will draw three souls out of one weaver? Shall we do that?
- Sir Andrew:* And you love me, let's do't: I am dog at a catch. 25
Feste: By'r lady, sir, and some dogs will catch well.
Sir Andrew: Most certain. Let our catch be, 'Thou knave'.
Feste: 'Hold thy peace, thou knave', knight? I shall constrain'd in't to call
 thee knave, knight.
- Sir Andrew:* 'Tis not the first time I have constrained one to call me knave. 30
 Begin, fool. It begins, 'Hold thy peace.'
Feste: I shall never begin if I hold my peace.
Sir Andrew: Good, i'faith. Come, begin.
- [*Catch sung*]
- Enter MARIA* 35
Maria: What a caterwauling do you keep here! If my lady have not called
 up her steward Malvolio and bid him turn you out of doors, never
 trust me.
- Sir Toby:* My lady's a Cataian, we are politicians, Malvolio's a Peg-a-
 Ramsey, and [*Sings*] 'Three merry men be we.' Am not I 40
 consanguineous? Am I not of her blood? Tilly vally! 'Lady!' [*Sings*]
 'There dwelt a man in Babylon, lady, lady.'

Feste: Beshrew me, the knight's in admirable fooling.
Sir Andrew: Ay, he does well enough if he be disposed, and so do I, too; he
 does it with a better grace, but I do it more natural. 45
Sir Toby: [*Sings*] O'the twelfth day of December –
Maria: For the love o'God, peace!
Enter MALVOLIO
Malvolio: My masters, are you mad? Or what are you? Have you no wit,
 manners, nor honesty but to gabble like tinkers at this time of 50
 night? Do ye make an alehouse of my lady's house, that ye
 squeak out your coziers' catchers without any mitigation or
 remorse of voice? Is there no respect of place, persons, nor time
 in you?
Sir Toby: We did keep time, sir, in our catches. Sneck up! 55
Malvolio: Sir Toby, I must be round with you. My lady bade me tell you that,
 though she harbours you as her kinsman, she's nothing allied to
 your disorders. If you can separate yourself and your
 misdemeanours, you are welcome to the house; if not, and it
 would please you to take leave of her, she is very willing to bid 60
 you farewell.
Sir Toby: [*Sings*] Farewell, dear heart, since I must needs be gone.
Maria: Nay, good Sir Toby.
Feste: [*Sings*] His eyes do show his days are almost done.
Malvolio: Is't even so? 65
Sir Toby: [*Sings*] But I will never die.
Feste: [*Sings*] Sir Toby, there you lie.
Malvolio: This is much credit to you.
Sir Toby: [*Sings*] Shall I bid him go?
Feste: [*Sings*] What and if you do? 70
Sir Toby: [*Sings*] Shall I bid him go, and spare not?
Feste: [*Sings*] O no, no, no, no, you dare not.
Sir Toby: Out o'time, sir? Ye lie! Art any more than a steward? Dost thou
 think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and
 ale? 75
Feste: Yes, by St Anne, and ginger shall be hot i'th'mouth too. [*Exit*]
Sir Toby: Th'art i'th'right. Go, sir, rub your chain with crumbs. A stoup of
 wine, Maria!
Malvolio: Mistress Mary, if you prized my lady's favour at anything more 80
 than contempt, you would not give means for this uncivil rule; she
 shall know of it, by this hand.
 [*Exit*]

Act 2 Scene 3