

Banha University
Faculty of Arts
English Department

نموذج الإجابة الخاص
بمادة الأدب المقارن
الفرقة الثالثة
قسم اللغة الإنجليزية
كلية الآداب

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تاريخ الإمتحان: 26-12-2013

A Guiding Model Answer for

Third Grade

Comparative Literature Exam

Faculty of Arts

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**BANHA UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ARTS
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
THIRD GRADE**



**FIRST TERM
YEAR (2013-2014)
TIME: 2 HOURS
FINAL EXAM**

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE EXAM (DECEMBER 26, 2013)

Answer the following questions:

DIRECTIONS: BE ORGANIZED; FOCUS ONLY ON THE ADDRESSED ISSUES AND WRITE YOUR ANSWERS ONLY IN THE FORM OF WELL-ORGANIZED ESSAYS, WHICH ADOPT THE FORM OF A THESIS STATEMENT, A BODY, AND A CONCLUSION. TIME LENGTH FOR EACH OF THE FIRST TWO QUESTIONS IS 40 MINUTES AND THE GRADE FOR EACH IS 5 MARKS, WHILE TIME LENGTH FOR EACH OF THE LAST TWO QUESTIONS IS 20 MINUTES AND THE GRADE FOR EACH IS 2.5 MARKS.

1. Nature, for Samuel Taylor Coleridge, is the model of organic form, and, for Ralph Waldo Emerson, is "the symbol of spirit," or "transcendentalism," and "the vehicle of thought ... in a simple, double, and threefold degree." Based on our class discussions and the assigned book, attempt a detailed point-by-point comparison/contrast essay between Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan" and Emerson's "The Rhodora" to show how both poems focus on the exploration of the previous literary principles of the two poets, and how both poets use various literary elements, either in a similar or different way, to work toward the expression of their ideas and principles?
2. In section four of the first chapter of the assigned book, *Comparative Literature: Poetry and Fiction*, the writer argues that a compare and contrast essay can be structured through a focus on the points of comparison and draws an example from the film *Mystic River* to explain this point (pages 30-31). In an essay form, compare the two wives in the film *Mystic River* and use the alternating point-by-point format to highlight their differences in terms of loyalty to their husbands, ability to protect their families, and appearance at the end of the film?
3. The garden as instinct is a prominent image in John Steinbeck's "The Chrysanthemums" and the rose of the title is the dominant symbol in William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily." Develop a parallel-order comparison between them to explain the highly symbolic meaning of both?
4. For all its mockery of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach," Anthony Hecht's dramatic monologue, "The Dover Bitch," is a tribute to the power that its predecessor continues to exert. Moreover, for all its irreverence, "The Dover Bitch" is nevertheless a love poem, though it is a poem about love without illusions. In an essay form, compare the forms and devices in the two poems by using the alternating point-by-point format to highlight their differences in terms of the use of structure, language, words, utterances such as expletives and contractions, and speech-making?

**GOOD LUCK
MOHAMMAD AL-HUSSINI ARAB**

ANSWERS

QUESTION 1

Nature, for Samuel Taylor Coleridge, is the model of organic form, and, for Ralph Waldo Emerson, is "the symbol of spirit," or "transcendentalism," and "the vehicle of thought ... in a simple, double, and threefold degree." Based on our class discussions and the assigned book, attempt a detailed point-by-point comparison/contrast essay between Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan" and Emerson's "The Rhodora" to show how both poems focus on the exploration of the previous literary principles of the two poets, and how both poets use various literary elements, either in a similar or different way, to work toward the expression of their ideas and principles?

ANSWER

Poetry for Samuel Taylor Coleridge is the product of the creative imagination of the poet. Imagination, for him, is the "reconciling and mediatory power" that joins reason to sense impressions and thereby "gives birth to a system of symbols." The primary imagination is "the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM." The secondary imagination differs in degree but not in kind from the primary imagination. Essentially, Coleridge seems to say that the imagination is creative, harmonizing, synthesizing, symbolizing, and reconciling.

The theory of "organic unity" attempts to see the work as a whole. "The organic form," he writes, "is innate; it shapes, as it develops, itself from within, and the fulness of its development is one and the same with perfection of its outward form. Such as the life is, such is the form." Thus, nature, for Coleridge, is the model of organic form. Poetry imitates nature's organic process of giving unifying form to all of its diverse elements. A poem, for Coleridge, is like a plant, a living organism, synthesizing all of its diverse elements—imagery, rhythm, language, and so on—into a harmonious and organic whole. On the other hand, Ralph Waldo Emerson declared in *Nature* that "Words are signs of natural facts. Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts. Nature is the symbol of spirit."

These theories are best represented in Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan" and Emerson's poem "The Rhodora." Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan" is the product of the synthetic power of the imagination. The action of the poem takes place through a circuit that consists of the two opposite poles of life and death, which, ultimately, are brought into harmony in the stereoscopic picture of immortality.

Coleridge sums up the idea of the whole poem in the first stanza. The "sacred river" which stands for life runs "Through caverns measureless to man" to "a sunless sea," which is the sea of the dead who never see the sun. The remaining part of the first stanza, in addition to the second, develops the images of life and death.

The image of life is reflected in the phrase "mighty fountain" where the poet refers to birth, and in a simile compares it to the personified earth which pants thickly due to the pangs of delivery. Then this "fountain" is transmuted into the sacred river—the river of life. In the beginning the scene is picturesque. It runs through "fertile ground," and is enriched with walls and towers, symbols of pomp and power. It also abounds in winding rivulets. These elements are in a realm of sun and greenery, which are symbols of life. The opening lines of the first stanza depicts life in its beauty through their musical artistry, which unconsciously prepares the reader for involvement in the images of life and death, and leads him to accept death as a state accompanied with rapture and delight.

The same fusion of life and death is echoed in the second stanza, where lines merge into the following lines, and the images of life are contrasted with those of death. As a result, the vivacity of the first stanza gives way to "a mazy motion," a motion characterized by uncertain progress. Innocence is replaced by experience at the end of which man sinks in agony to the "lifeless ocean," the symbol of death. Thus the stream of life, which

has started from the fountain, is now terminated in the caverns—those which are "measureless to man." The contrast between the stage of innocence (life) and that of experience (death) is clear in the second stanza, which starts with the adversative conjunction "But" and the exclamatory "oh!" The continuity of the stream of life, with its associated pleasures and sorrows, is reflected in the syntax and the additive conjunctions. The stanza, long as it is, consists only of two multiple sentences, and the additive conjunctions, "and" and "then," support the syntax and the cumulative burdens of the life of experience.

The ending lines of the second stanza foreshadow what is going to take place in the third stanza. The voices which Kubla Khan hears are not, in fact, foretelling war, but refer to the process inside the poet's mind; that is, to the synthetic power of the imagination to create harmony out of the discordant elements of life and death. Because the sense does not end with the final lines of the stanza, the second stanza merges into the third.

In the third stanza, the poet's imagination creates a dome of pleasure which is not as stately as that which is decreed by Kubla Khan, but embodies the "mingled measure" of the "fountain" and the "caves," the symbols of life and death. Coleridge has harmonized the discordant qualities of both life and death and the outcome of the marriage between both is the miracle which unites the "sunny pleasure-dome" of Kubla Khan to the "caves of ice." It is not the shadow of the dome that Coleridge beholds but the stereoscopic picture of immortality which results from the two different angles of life and death.

In the fourth stanza, the image of the dome, in which the poet's imagination has harmonized the discordant qualities of life and death, is reiterated in the image of the "Abyssinian maid" who is seen playing music, since in music, the musician can bring discordant tunes into harmony. Thus, if the poet has the ability to animate this music "within himself," he will be able to rebuild the "pleasure-dome" "in air" or in his poetry.

Emerson's poem "The Rhodora" flows down the page employing natural facts: the description of this flower, its place in the woods, and its relationship to its surroundings. He wants readers to get its deeper meaning: the spiritual fundamentals of awareness, transformation, and reflection. He argues that this beauty is the art of a life-force common to both humans and nature, reaffirming that "nature is the symbol of spirit."

Emerson opens "The Rhodora" by describing an awakening to the beauty of nature. A natural, unplanned wind penetrates the symbolic solitude of winter. It announces the eruption of spring. As the poet lets the sea-winds pierce the consciousness and its chamber, spring jolts the poet into a new awareness. The poet sees the fresh flowers in the woods. The attentiveness rouses the soul. As the poet examines the shrub, the awakening intensifies. The leafless blooms spread in a damp nook. It symbolizes a desire to belong. They nudge at the existing hierarchy to establish their roots and hope to make new friends. This awakening to the new place represents the first of Emerson's spiritual fundamentals.

Emerson could best illustrate transformation, his second spiritual fundamental, if he allowed himself to experience it. Emerson's surroundings gave him the courage to transform. Awakened to nature's beauty, the poet notices things previously unseen. The beautiful petals transform the appearance of the small body of still water, the pool. This deep or still place in the stream serves as the background for the purple petals, creating an unexpectedly brilliant and colorful scene. The male red-bird usually draws the attention of the observer. Yet, its spectacular array fades next to the purple flowers. The red-bird at the pool no longer contains the same influence that it did before. The natural facts have led to a spiritual fact; these new events have changed the observer's perception.

To Emerson, beauty exists for pleasure. He asserts that just as human beings use eyes to see, beauty is there to be seen. Emerson holds the beauty of nature so reverently, that he applies the term dear when conversing with the rhodora. The culmination of the poem shows the natural introspection that follows a transformation. The poet wonders why the rhodora appeared in that place and at that time. The poet assumes that precisely the same strength or force that brought the rhodora brought the poet. Emerson believes that

nature is the symbol of spirit. Through introspection, the third of Emerson's spiritual fundamentals, the question gets answered for each individual.

In this poem, Emerson gave readers a multifaceted illustration of his three spiritual principles: awareness, transformation, and introspection. Yet, he could only do that if he achieved these principles in his life. Much like the elements of nature, the soil, water, sun, and shade that nurtured the rhodora to blossom, Emerson created his own foundation.

Thus, we can observe that it is the "organic unity" which ties the two poems together. Coleridge presented it by creating the stereoscopic picture of immortality, and, Emerson, by illustrating his three spiritual principles: awareness, transformation, and introspection.

QUESTION 2

In section four of the first chapter of the assigned book, *Comparative Literature: Poetry and Fiction*, the writer argues that a compare and contrast essay can be structured through a focus on the points of comparison and draws an example from the film *Mystic River* to explain this point (pages 30-31). In an essay form, compare the two wives in the film *Mystic River* and use the alternating point-by-point format to highlight their differences in terms of loyalty to their husbands, ability to protect their families, and appearance at the end of the film?

ANSWER

A compare and contrast essay can also be structured through a focus on the points of comparison. In the following essay, I compare two wives in the film *Mystic River* and use the alternating or point-by-point format to highlight their differences in terms of loyalty to their husbands, ability to protect their families, and appearance at the end of the film.

The introductory paragraph lets us know that the items being compared are two wives, Celeste and Annabeth. In the next paragraph, I summarize the main story line and show how it impacts these women in terms of their belief in their husbands, their ability to protect their families, and their appearance by the end of the film. I then go through these points one by one, contrasting their implications for Celeste and Annabeth. In the end, the essay touches on the importance of this examination: "Those things could affect not only individuals but also the entire family."

The story in *Mystic River* unfolded calmly like a river flowing in gentle waves. In this largely silent movie, I saw how important the housewife was in the family. Also, I found differences between the two wives, Celeste and Annabeth.

Three childhood friends, Jimmy, Dave, and Sean, grew up in a small and shabby village in Boston. They used to spend their time playing hockey. One day, David was kidnapped by two strange men. A few days later, David escaped successfully from them. But their happy time in childhood ended. They did not keep in touch with each other. Twenty-five years later, those three guys met again by a tragedy: Jimmy's daughter was killed. In that time, David's wife Celeste suspected her husband had killed Jimmy's daughter. As Jimmy pursued the question of the accident, Celeste confessed to Jimmy what she thought. Jimmy burned with revengeful thoughts and killed David, but it turned out David was not the murderer. Jimmy told his wife, Annabeth, everything that happened to him. When she heard about David, she might have been shocked. But she was not agitated. She showed her husband her strong loyalty for him. While Celeste's distrust of her husband destroyed her family, Annabeth's belief in her husband kept her family firmly together.

Celeste and Annabeth were both housewives, but they had a different belief about their husbands. While Celeste had a distrust, Annabeth had a strong loyalty for her husband. For instance, when Celeste's husband David came home with a bloody T-shirt, she was embarrassed. The next day, when it was discovered that Annabeth's daughter had been murdered, Celeste began to suspect her husband was the killer. She made a

mistake. She confessed to Jimmy (Annabeth's husband) what she thought without any objective evidence. On the other hand, in the case of Annabeth, when she heard that her husband had killed David, she was not agitated. Even though she was stunned, she remained firm; furthermore, she consoled her husband. That showed us that their beliefs about their husbands were contrary to each other.

Secondly, I was able to see a difference between the two women's abilities to protect their families. Celeste lied about the truth to Jimmy. That meant that she was an egoist and didn't take care of her husband and her family, including her son. She just wanted to protect herself from David. In the long run, her irresponsible conduct destroyed her family. Because of her hasty judgment, her son Michael would live under a fatherless family, and she would live with a guilty conscience. On the other side, Annabeth tried to protect her family from tragedy. As she said "Your father is a king," she encouraged her husband and made her family hold fast. While Celeste exposed her family's problem, Annabeth concealed hers.

Finally, the two women's appearances indicated how they were different. In the movie, Celeste looked sad and full of doubt. Her face was filled with worries and clouded with anxiety. But Annabeth had a fair and a brilliant look. In the parade at the end of the movie, that was distinguished clearly. After the end of the murder case, Celeste avoided the eyes of other people, such as Annabeth and Jimmy, while Annabeth was looking at Celeste as if nothing had happened.

By those three points, I saw how different the two wives were. They were different with regard to their loyalty to their husbands, their ability to protect their families, and their appearance in life. Through seeing this movie, I realized how important the housewife's role and her belief about her husband are, because those things could affect not only individuals but also the entire family.

QUESTION 3

The garden as instinct is a prominent image in John Steinbeck's "The Chrysanthemums" and the rose of the title is the dominant symbol in William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily." Develop a parallel-order comparison between them to explain the highly symbolic meaning of both?

ANSWER

The Chrysanthemums by John Steinbeck and *A Rose for Emily* by William Faulkner are similar in that both writers title their stories with names of certain flowers which have highly symbolic meaning.

The garden as instinct—as the life of the spirit—is a prominent image in "The Chrysanthemums." In "The Chrysanthemums," Steinbeck presents the figure of Eliza Allen, a woman whose romantic gentleness conflicts with the rough matter-of-factness of her husband and the deceitful cunning of a tinker. The story reveals a skillful meshing of character and setting, of symbol and theme. The garden is at once the chief setting and abiding symbol that define Eliza's character and her predicament as a woman.

Dressed in a man's clothing, Eliza is working in her garden when the story opens. Already the contrast is clear between Eliza's sensitive nature and the manlike indifference of her dress, her husband and life on the ranch, bathed in "the cold greyflannel fog of winter." Eliza's only emotional outlet, her only contact with a deeper life-pulse, is her growing of chrysanthemums, symbolic of both her sexual need and her recognition of the dominance in her nature of the life of the instinct. Like the virgin queen Elizabeth, Eliza has no children & her mannish ways merely disguise her sensitivity, a sensitivity that her husband Henry does not understand.

When a tinker stops his wagon at the ranch, looking for pots to repair, Eliza at first has no work for him, but when he praises her chrysanthemums, implying an understanding of her nature, Eliza gives him the flowers in a pot. That night, on their way to town for dinner and—the husband teases—to the prizefights, Eliza sees the discarded flowers on the road and realizes that the tinker had deceived her. Like her husband, the tinker did not really understand her; he had merely used her to his own advantage.

On the other hand, the dominant symbol in Faulkner's tale is, of course, the rose of the title, which appears only in the final scene of the story when the bridal chamber is broken into and a rosy color seems to fill the entire tomb-like room: "A thin, acrid pall as of the tomb seemed to lie everywhere upon this room decked and furnished as for a bridal: upon the valance curtains of faded rose color, upon the rose-shaded lights." A rose is a flower given in love, but this rose is given partly as a funereal offering, and partly to make improvements for what the town had done to Miss Emily. The townspeople had frozen her in time, prevented her from growing and changing, and from having a full life. Through the townsman-spokesman's eyes, we see her unchanged, "bloated, like a body long submerged in motionless water." Earlier, as young a woman, while all about her was changing, her image in the town's eyes remained static: "We had long thought of them as a tableau, Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horse-whip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door." Social customs had kept her froth participating in life, and the town thought of her always in public, yet static terms: "angels in colored church windows," "a strained flag," "motionless as that of an idol," "the carven torso of an idol in a niche." Twice in her life Miss Emily had clung to the only life (and love) she had known: she held fast to the bodies of Homer and her father. So, at the story's conclusion, we are shocked by the necrophilia, yet we feel pity for Miss Emily.

QUESTION 4

For all its mockery of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach," Anthony Hecht's dramatic monologue, "The Dover Bitch," is a tribute to the power that its predecessor continues to exert. Moreover, for all its irreverence, "The Dover Bitch" is nevertheless a love poem, though it is a poem about love without illusions. In an essay form, compare the forms and devices in the two poems by using the alternating point-by-point format to highlight their differences in terms of the use of structure, language, words, utterances such as expletives and contractions, and speech-making?

ANSWER

For all its mockery of Mathew Arnold, Anthony Hecht's dramatic monologue is a tribute to the power that its predecessor continues to exert. Moreover, for all its irreverence, "The Dover Bitch" is nevertheless a love poem, though it is a poem about love without illusions. As an alternative to the elevated but empty sentiments that the speaker in "Dover Beach" proffers his companion, Hecht's speaker offers a kind of love that is candid and carnal, and all the more ardent for his acceptance of his beloved's imperfections. While Arnold can love the woman standing beside him on the coast at Dover evidently only by elevating her into a disembodied philosophical principle, Hecht's speaker embraces concrete love by embracing a woman who is alive in an imperfect body.

"Dover Beach" is a monument to the "high seriousness," while Hecht's revision is an exercise in slightly ironic or odd humor. In contrast to the studied formality of "Dover Beach," written in four stanzas of carefully organized blank verse, "The Dover Bitch" is composed in a single 29-line stanza of free verse that simulates the casual manner of dialect speech. Like a casual conversation, the run-on lines seem to wander, and instead of concluding the poem merely stops.

"So there stood Matthew Arnold and this girl," begins the anonymous speaker of "The Dover Bitch," a rude man who does not himself pretend to "poetry" but addresses the reader frankly in the simple English of the streets, a language ostensibly so frank that it does not shy away from the rude word "bitch." The speaker's consistent preference for colloquial over fancy language reinforces his claim to be a candid alternative to Arnold's hollow impressive and exaggerated words. Filled with casual utterances such as the expletives "so" and "well now" and the contractions "I'll," "it's," and "mustn't," Hecht's speaker offers the illusion of verbal spontaneity—and thus sincerity—in contrast to the indirectness of Arnold's carefully artificial clauses.

The speaker's apparent ability to summarize all of Arnold's elegant words in barely three lines is an implicit attack on the older poet's wordiness: "Try to be true to me, / And I'll do the same for you, for things are bad / All over, etc., etc." is presumably what Arnold would have said had he shared this speaker's honesty and his knack for getting directly to the point. The "etc., etc." is an overwhelming ridicule of "Dover Beach" for being redundant, as if one need not pay much attention to exactly what Arnold is saying beyond his ordinary affirmation of faithful love in a treacherous world.

The subsequent account of the woman's reactions to Arnold remains colloquial and lively, suggesting that she shares the speaker's impatience with Arnold's good, elusive oratory. Repetition of the sloppy, very casual intensifier "really" ("really felt sad," "really angry," "really tough") distances her further from Arnold the difficult stylist. The line that informs readers of her resentment at being addressed "As sort of a mournful cosmic last resort"—another comic reduction of Arnold's elegant poetry—is abruptly and comically followed by the judgment that this "Is really tough on a girl, and she was pretty"—an assertion in very simple English of very simple truths that Arnold's exquisite proclamations seem to ignore. The woman sets up a vocabulary including "one or two unprintable things," offensive that is inconceivable within Arnold's chaste and earnest poem. The speaker seems, again, to suggest that there is a greater honesty in plain, even disrespectful English.

"She's really all right" is the speaker's final, unpretentious, and tolerant judgment. In a loose society where encounters are casual and occasional, he is not ashamed to admit that, neither presuming nor desiring any exclusive claim to her attention, he meets her about once a year. Arnold lamented his inability to rely on anything in this bleak universe except the woman standing beside him, and although Hecht's speaker exposes even that faith in personal love as deluded, he characterizes her as "dependable as they come." It is faint praise, since "they" evidently do not come very dependable at all, but the speaker seems willing, all in all, to settle for much less—the merely human—than Arnold is.

The final line of "The Dover Bitch" is a nonchalant non sequitur, a further affront to the tradition of the well-made poem. "And sometimes I bring her a bottle of *Nuit d'Amour*," says the speaker, in an afterthought that reinforces the image of an ordinary man speaking without premeditation. *Nuit d'Amour*, the name of what is evidently either perfume or wine, answers the woman's longing for "all the wine and enormous beds / And blandishments in French and the perfumes," a physical longing that Arnold's metaphysical abstractions leave unsatisfied. By contrast, Hecht's speaker gives her *Nuit d'Amour*, which means "night of love" and provides an alternative, carnal version of love in answer to Arnold's abstract meditations.