
LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9695/72

Paper 7 Comment and Appreciation

May/June 2019

2 hours

No Additional Materials are required.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

An answer booklet is provided inside this question paper. You should follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

Answer **two** questions.

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

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.



This document consists of **5** printed pages, **3** blank pages and **1** Insert.

1 Write a critical commentary on the following extract from the novel *The Garden of Evening Mists* (2012) by Tan Twan Eng.

The narrator is being given lessons in Japanese archery by Aritomo.

I enjoyed my archery practice with Aritomo. There was more to the Way of the Bow than hitting the target. The central purpose of *kyudo*¹ was to train the mind, Aritomo said, to strengthen our focus through every ritualised movement we made in the *shajo*². ‘From the moment you walk to the shooting line, your breathing must be regular,’ he said. ‘Your breaths must match every move you make, until the arrow has left not just your hands, but also your mind.’ 5

Each session began with us sitting quietly for a few minutes, purging our thoughts of all distractions. I discovered how much clutter bounced around in my head. It was difficult for me to sit there and not think of anything at all. Even with my eyes closed, I was conscious of everything around me: the rustle of the wind, a bird picking its way across the roof tiles, the itching on my leg. 10

‘Your mind is just like a strip of flypaper hanging from the ceiling,’ Aritomo complained. ‘Every thought, however fleeting and inconsequential, sticks to it.’

Every detail of the eight formal steps in the process of shooting was prescribed, even down to the sequence of breathing, and I felt a satisfaction in conforming to the precise and ritualised movements. I practised the pattern of regulated breathing on my own, and I felt my mind and body slide gradually closer into harmony. In time I came to understand that, in decreeing the way I had to breathe, *kyudo* was showing me how to live. In the space between releasing the bowstring and the arrow hitting the target, I discovered a quiet place I could escape into, a slit in time in which I could hide. 15

The two of us would stand at the shooting line, I imagined us looking like the pair of bronze archers on his desk. I enjoyed seeing the arrows fly from my bow. It had been difficult at first, when they too often veered to the sides or fell short of the *matto*³. 25

‘You let go of your connection with the arrow too early,’ Aritomo said. ‘Hold it with your mind, tell it where you want it to go, and guide it all the way to the *matto*. And when it strikes, hold on to it for a moment longer.’

‘It’s not alive,’ I said. ‘It obeys no one.’

Motioning me to step aside, he raised his *kyu*⁴ and nocked⁵ an arrow into the bowstring. He drew the bow to its limit, the stiff bindings releasing little clouds of fine dust into the air as the bow flexed. He aimed the arrow at the *matto* and closed his eyes. I heard his breaths come out in longer, quieter segments, softer and softer until it seemed as though he had stopped breathing altogether. 30

Let it go, in my mind I urged him. *Let it go*. 35

A smile hovered around his lips. *Not yet*.

I was certain that I had not seen his lips move, and yet the voice in my head was unmistakable.

Keeping his eyes shut, Aritomo released the bowstring. Almost immediately I heard the arrow hit the *matto*. Aritomo opened his eyes and we both turned to look at the target sixty feet away. The fletched end of the arrow stuck out of it, drawing a line of shadow across its surface and transforming it into a sundial. Even from where I was standing, I could see that he had sent the arrow right into the dead centre of the target. 40

¹ *kyudo* – archery

² *shajo* – archery practice ground

³ *matto* – target

⁴ *kyu* – traditional bow used in archery

⁵ *nocked* – placed

2 Write a critical commentary on the following poem by Frank Collymore (published in 1959).

Hymn to the Sea

Like all who live on small islands
 I must always be remembering the sea,
 Being always cognizant¹ of her presence; viewing
 Her through apertures in the foliage; hearing,
 When the wind is from the south, her music, and smelling 5
 The warm rankness of her; tasting
 And feeling her kisses on bright sunbathed days:
 I must always be remembering the sea.

Always, always the encircling sea,
 Eternal: lazylapping, crisscrossed with stillness; 10
 Or windruffed, aglitter with gold; and the surf
 Waist-high for children, or horses for Titans²;
 Her lullaby, her singing, her moaning; on sand,
 On shingle³, on breakwater, and on rock;
 By sunlight, starlight, moonlight, darkness: 15
 I must always be remembering the sea.

Go down to the sea upon this random day
 By metalled road, by sandway, by rockpath,
 And come to her. Upon the polished jetsam⁴,
 Shell and stone and weed and saltfruit 20
 Torn from the underwater continents, cast
 Your garments and despondencies; re-enter
 Her embracing womb: a return, a completion.
 I must always be remembering the sea.

Life came from the sea, and once a goddess arose 25
 Fullgrown from the saltdeep; love
 Flows from the sea, a flood; and the food
 Of islanders is reaped from the sea's harvest.
 And not only life and sustenance; visions, too,
 Are born of the sea: the patterning of her rhythm 30
 Finds echoes within the musing mind.
 I must always be remembering the sea.

Symbol of fruitfulness, symbol of barrenness,
 Mother and destroyer, the calm and the storm!
 Life and desire and dreams and death 35
 Are born of the sea; this swarming land
 Her creation, her signature set upon the salt ooze
 To blossom into life; and the red hibiscus
 And the red roofs burn more brightly against her blue.
 I must always be remembering the sea. 40

¹ *cognizant* – aware

² *Titans* – mythical giants

³ *shingle* – small stones on a beach

⁴ *jetsam* – objects thrown into the sea

3 Write a critical commentary on the following extract from the play *Morning Sacrifice* (published 1942) by Dymphna Cusack.

Sheila Ray is a young teacher, in the school where she herself was a student; Miss Kingsbury is the Deputy Head of the school, and wants to have a private talk about Mary Grey, one of Sheila's students.

	[MISS KINGSBURY <i>sits beside</i> SHEILA.]	
Kingsbury:	Now, my dear, you and I shall have our little talk, though I really have not the time to spare this morning. I'm sorry to disturb you, Mrs MacNeil, but Mr Patterson is in my office. Do you mind?	
	[MRS MAC <i>picks up her papers, looking uncomfortable.</i>]	5
Mrs Mac	[<i>as she goes</i>]: Of course not.	
Kingsbury:	Thank you so much.	
	[<i>She smiles enchantingly.</i>]	
	[<i>To</i> SHEILA] Now, dear, you know that I only want to help you, do you not?	10
Sheila:	Of course, Miss Kingsbury.	
Kingsbury:	You see, you came to us with rather a flourish of trumpets, did you not?	
	[<i>As</i> SHEILA <i>is about to make a miserable protest, KINGSBURY stops her.</i>]	15
	I am not blaming you for that. We know how foolish the newspapers are about university medals and scholarships—so vulgar. And no doubt you resented all that publicity about your engagement, more than anyone else. It was not your fault. But I do feel that your academic career and—perhaps foolishly—the affection I had for you as one of my old pupils, did incline me to make undue demands on you.	20
Sheila:	But ...	
Kingsbury:	My dear, it was entirely my fault, though I must confess that, at the time, I did not foresee that you would allow yourself to be distracted by ... er ... romance so soon. I know now that it would have been fairer to have put you on lower classes till you had familiarised yourself with the problems of teaching.	25
Sheila:	My Fifths have done fairly well ...	
Kingsbury:	In their exam—yes. But I cannot help feeling that your approach there has not been quite sufficiently objective.	30
Sheila:	Objective?	
Kingsbury:	Yes. Not, of course, that I blame you entirely for this unfortunate affair of Mary Grey's—though it would perhaps have been wiser if you had not allowed your relationship to have become so personal. [<i>She pauses while she looks through the letters she carries.</i>] By the way, I have a letter to you from Mary. [<i>She hands over a bulky letter.</i>] Do you really think it is wise, my dear, for you to be in communication with Mary at such a time?	35
Sheila:	But, Miss Kingsbury ...	
Kingsbury:	Your position as a member of the staff entails certain obligations, Sheila. You realise that, I suppose?	40
Sheila:	Yes, of course. But you see, Mary is so worried and unhappy.	

- Kingsbury:* Then surely, if she has any representations to make, it would be more correct—and more effective—for them to be made through the proper channels: through Miss Woods—or myself. 45
- Sheila:* I think she was too afraid and ashamed.
- Kingsbury* [*obviously controlling her anger with difficulty*]: If she is innocent, she has nothing to fear. Her shame I can understand, though perhaps you have more intimate knowledge of the reasons for her feelings than I.
- Sheila:* Miss Kingsbury? 50
- Kingsbury:* But to make hysterical appeals to a junior on the staff instead of to those teachers who have guided her for years must seem a little irregular even to you, my dear.
- Sheila* [*miserably*]: I'm sorry.
- Kingsbury:* Well, well, we shall leave it to be dealt with later. Though, if you seriously intend to make teaching your career, you must really display more self-control than you showed on Friday. To faint in front of the girls! One must be so careful, when one is dealing with adolescent girls, to avoid anything that savours of exhibitionism. 55
- [*She sits looking at her beautifully manicured hands as though seeking some answer to a problem. Then she rises and goes to the door.*] 60
- Mrs MacNeil, could you spare a moment? I am so sorry to disturb you.
[MISS KINGSBURY *sits and looks at the list. MRS MACNEIL comes in.*]
- I am sure, Sheila, that you are as disturbed about these 4C results as I am. I should like to compare them with yours, Mrs MacNeil. 65
- Mrs Mac* [*handing her a list*]: Certainly.
[MISS KINGSBURY *looks at the list with lifted eyebrows and pursed lips.*]
- 4C is a very poor class, Miss Kingsbury. 70
- Kingsbury:* Naturally one does not expect from 4C what one expects from 4A. But by comparison with their results in other subjects—Maths and French particularly—their English and History are very disappointing.
- Mrs Mac:* Special Lower Standard papers were set in Maths and French.
[MISS KINGSBURY *is temporarily thrown off her balance. She rises and goes to her desk with an expression of contempt and anger.*] 75
- Kingsbury:* The question of *standards*, Mrs MacNeil, is one that I regard very seriously. If mistresses of other subjects wish to lower the standards we have always upheld at Easthaven it is not for me to object as a matter of principle. I am *not* the Headmistress. But in my own subjects, at least, I shall always insist that only the best is good enough. I am sure Sheila agrees. 80
- Sheila:* Oh, yes, Miss Kingsbury ... but ...

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