

## 淡江大學 100 學年度博士班甄試招生考試試題

系別：英文學系 A 組

科目：英文 (含英美文學議題)

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本試題共 2 大題， 2 頁

**A. The following passages are quoted from Matthew Arnold's "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time." What do you think is his central argument? Do you agree with him or not? Why? Please answer and elaborate in a way that displays your grasp of and insights into the issue. (50%)**

It has long seemed to me that the burst of creative activity in our literature, through the first quarter of this century, had about it in fact something premature; and that from this cause its productions are doomed, most of them, in spite of the sanguine hopes which accompanied and do still accompany them, to prove hardly more lasting than the productions of far less splendid epochs. And this prematureness comes from its having proceeded without having its proper data, without sufficient materials to work with. In other words, the English poetry of the first quarter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, did not know enough. This makes Byron so empty of matter, Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth even, profound as he is, yet so wanting in completeness and variety. . . .

But to speak of books and reading may easily lead to a misunderstanding here. It was not really books and reading that lacked to our poetry at this epoch: Shelley had plenty of reading, Coleridge had immense reading. Pindar and Sophocles . . . had not many books; Shakespeare was no deep reader. True; but in the Greece of Pindar and Sophocles, in the England of Shakespeare, the poet lived in a current of ideas in the highest degree animating and nourishing to the creative power; society was, in the fullest measure, permeated by fresh thought, intelligent and alive. And this state of things is the true basis for the creative power's exercise, in this it finds its data, its materials, truly ready for its hand; all the books and reading in the world are only valuable as they are helps to this. Even when this does not actually exist, books and reading may enable a man to construct a kind of semblance of it in his own mind, a world of knowledge and intelligence in which he may live and work. This is by no means an equivalent to the artist for the nationally diffused life and thought of the epochs of Sophocles or Shakespeare; but, besides that it may be a means of preparation for such epochs, it does really constitute, if many share in it, a quickening and sustaining atmosphere of great value.

**B. Please summarize the following passages in 50 words and then comment in terms of its link to American literature at the time of Henry David Thoreau. (50%)**

Henry David Thoreau endorsed civil disobedience, opposed slavery and lived for two years in a hut in the woods of Concord, an experience he described in *Walden*. Now he turns out to have another line in his résumé: climate researcher. He did not realize it, of course. Thoreau died in 1862, when the industrial revolution was just beginning to pump climate-changing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. In 1851, when he started recording when and where plants flowered in Concord, he was making notes for a book on the seasons. Now, though, researchers at Boston University and Harvard are using those notes to discern patterns of plant abundance and decline in Concord — and by extension, New England — and to link those patterns to changing climate. Their conclusions are clear. On average, common species are flowering seven days earlier than they did in Thoreau's day, Richard B. Primack, a conservation biologist at Boston University, and Abraham J.

10-2

Miller-Rushing, then his graduate student, reported this year in the journal *Ecology*. Working with Charles C. Davis, an evolutionary biologist at Harvard and two of his graduate students, they determined that 27 percent of the species documented by Thoreau have vanished from Concord and 36 percent are present in such small numbers that they probably will not survive for long. Those findings appear in the current issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

From 1851 through 1858, Thoreau tracked the first flowerings of perhaps 500 species, Dr. Primack said. "He knew what he was doing, and he did it really systematically." Dr. Primack and Dr. Miller-Rushing did their own surveys in 2004, 2005 and 2006. They also consulted notes from Pennie Logemann, a landscape designer who tracked flowering times from 1963 to 1993 as an aid to planning Concord gardens. And they looked at contributions by members of area plant, insect and bird clubs and the work of additional participants in Concord's long line of passionate amateur naturalists, some of whose records are preserved in the Free Public Library here. When Dr. Davis and his colleagues began analyzing the data, things got off to a rough start. "It's actually a very specialized kind of analysis," Dr. Primack said. Mr. Willis "kept explaining what the analysis was showing, and I kept saying, 'I don't understand.'" Once he did understand, he added, it became apparent that "a couple of times they had not done the analysis correctly because they did not understand the field data." Now, though, they have figured out how to communicate. "Climate change, ecology and evolutionary biology have been going their own separate ways," Mr. Ruhfel said. "We see now we have information we can share and really further the field." Now the professors and their graduate students are on the trail of more data. For example, there is growing evidence that as birds change their migration patterns in response to climate change, they may no longer be in sync with the insect species they feed on. Elizabeth Bacon, another of Dr. Primack's graduate students, is combing Thoreau's notes on birds and the records of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, a local organization, to see what they can contribute.