

97/100

PART I. IDs (3 points each)

For each of the following passages taken from works of literature, identify the author (first and last name) and the title.

1. Even now when I recall his eyes I can't help but tremble. Even though he could not speak, he said everything in his heart with that one look. It was not a look of anger or even sadness, but one of icy contempt. It was that look, rather than the man's kick, that made me cry out and finally lose consciousness.

In a Grove, Akutagawa Ryunosuke

2. I hated the kind of guests that came to a country dinner party. They came with one end in view, which was to eat and drink, and they were the sort of people that waited eagerly for any event which might provide a break in the monotony of their lives. Since childhood, I had hated to see them at our house and to have to behave respectfully towards them.

Kokoro, Natsume Soseki

3. The French consul, his eyes riveted on Shinoura from the start, was increasingly overcome by a mixture of shock and fear. Unable to stay in his seat after hearing Shinoura's overwhelming cry during what was for him a totally new experience, he finally stood up, looking as if he were going to faint.

Incident at Sukai, Mori Ogai

4. Customs here are indeed a little different. You won't find many women who tie their sashes neatly behind their waists. It's one thing to see a woman of a certain age who favors gaudy patterns, or a sash cut immoderately wide. It's quite another to see these barefaced girls of fifteen or sixteen, all decked out in flashy clothes and blowing on bladder cherries, which everybody knows are used as contraceptives. But that's what kind of neighborhood it is.

Child's Play, Higuchi Ichiyo

5. This was because during the past several years the city of Kyoto had been devastated by one calamity after another, including earthquakes, cyclones, fires, and famine. Hence the capital had become desolate beyond imagining. Ancient chronicles note that Buddhist statues and altars were chopped into pieces and piled by the roadside, still showing signs of lacquer and goldleaf, to be sold as firewood.

Rashomon, Akutagawa Ryunosuke

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Part II. Short Answer Questions

Answer the following 5 questions, using approximately two sentences for each answer (7 points each).

1. In "Yuki Onna" (both the story and film) why does the snow woman spare the woodcutter's life in the initial snowstorm? What promise does she extract from him?

The yuki-onna feels that the woodcutter is so young and pities him, so she decides not to give him the same fate as his old man. The promise is that he will never speak about ^{seeing/} meeting her in the future during this snowstorm (or about what she said and did) to anyone ever or else she'll kill him.

2. In "Child's Play," how does Midori change at the end of the work? How does the adult world influence the world of childhood in the story?

Midori changes from being a proud, lively child who loves being the center of attention to being timid, ^{shy,} and embarrassed all the time, and hating being in the spotlight and being stared at. The adult world encroaches on the world of childhood from the very beginning of the story, as each of the children are set up to follow their family's profession ^{as they were child} even. (Nobu going to be a priest; Midori will be a courtesan). With the realization of the ^{entire} encroaching adulthood and its implications, children like Midori lose the happiness of childhood and are thrown into the harsh reality of adulthood.

3. What does Kanbei's rescue of the boy at the beginning of Seven Samurai tell us about his character? At the end of the film, why does Kanbei (the leader of the samurai) say that this was a losing battle for the samurai?

Excellent!

Kanbei's rescue shows that he is brave, compassionate and selfless, as he is even willing to cut off his topknot (symbol of his samurai status) without hesitation to save the boy. To the samurai, it was a losing battle because though the farmers "won" because the threat of bandits is gone, Kanbei and the remaining samurai carry the burden of survival (as 4 of their comrades have died). For their bravery, they receive ^{reward} little in return except for honor, which came at a steep price, and they are left once again in a state of uncertainty ^{after the battle is over} and must find a new purpose for themselves, unlike the farmers who can continue working happily.

Yes!

Part II Continued

and nation

4. What values are associated with the samurai in "Incident at Sakai"? What is the reaction of those who are spared execution?

These samurai ^{have the} ~~are~~ traditional samurai values of being honorable and selfless, with absolute devotion and loyalty to their masters and greater authority - to the extent that they'll willingly and gladly give up their lives for their master.

Those who are spared are greatly disappointed and upset that they won't be able to share the same fate as their companions, who will die honorably as martyrs who defended the honor of their lords and their nation.

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many are farmers who were drafted into the war. Do you remember the scene where one climbs the bell tower and wants to ring the bell? ~~Heardly samurai behavior~~

want samurai status

5. In Kokoro, why is the narrator drawn to Sensei? What is the meaning of the Japanese word kokoro?

The narrator is attracted to Sensei's mysterious ^{and profound} character as well as his loneliness, which the narrator relates to. The narrator is also fascinated with ^{and drawn to} Sensei's ~~attitudes~~ indifference to his surroundings and his social obligations, since the narrator himself is struggling against ^{the} ~~the~~ social obligations his family has placed on him.

What is the cause of this loneliness?
 ↓
 guilt from K

"Kokoro" means the heart, soul, ^{or} inner self (something inside oneself), and can be linked to one's ^{sense of} personal identity and self.

Part III. Essay Question (50 points)

Answer **ONE** of the following two questions, using approximately 1 page, drawing upon specific details from the relevant works to support your answer.

1. Yōkai (spirits) have been described as "liminal" creatures, inhabiting the borderlines between different spaces and times. In what way can this description apply not only to Yōkai, but also to other images and figures we have studied in the first half of the quarter? Choose two characters from different works of literature or film that we have studied and explain how they could be understood as liminal or borderline figures. Between what two worlds, spaces, or times do these characters exist? What are the characteristics that mark them as borderline figures?

2. What are the main differences between "In a Grove" and Kurosawa's film *Rashomon*? How do the changes that Kurosawa made alter the meaning of Akutagawa's original work?

Borderline figures ^{can} exist on the cusp between two different physical worlds or different time periods. On the border of modern and premodern Japan, and living during this transitional time period is Sensesi from Natsume Soseki's *Kokoro*, while Midori, from Higuchi Ichiro's "Child's Play" is on the boundary between childhood and adulthood.

Sensesi, born a Meiji man, has the lifestyle and viewpoint of one who lives in traditional Japan and ^{of} one who has the traditional Japanese culture deeply engrained in him. Yet, Sensesi was born in a time of great transition—the rapid modernization of Japan, a borderline event itself with Japan transitioning from traditional Japan to ~~was~~ a Western, modern country. Thus, Sensesi is a man who very much embodies the cultural transition and stands on the border between the two cultures, since he was born in this time period. During his life, like many Meiji people of his time, he continued to hold both the traditional values of Japan and ~~to~~ learn the ways of modern culture. At the end of his life, Sensesi remained on this borderline, which became especially prominent after the Meiji's emperor's death. He was a Meiji man living in a new and foreign modernized world, who was neither fully rooted in traditional Japan nor fully familiar ^{with} and belonging to the world of modern Japan (such as the narrator and the younger generation, who were born and raised in the era of modernization). Thus, Sensesi is a man of ^{these} two vastly time periods having the characteristics of both someone who finds comfort in the familiar traditional Japan ^{that he was born into} and one who has adopted modern values such as the Western spirit and ideal of individualism and self-pursuit. Sensesi represents and embodies an interaction of these two worlds because he has the qualities of a person from both time periods, but he is not strictly one or the other — it is these qualities that establish Sensesi as a borderline figure for these two different times.

embodies cusp

↳ have characters of both

Good point! →

wife embodies, who is largely untroubled by modernization

Midori, though also living on the borderline between east and western culture, also exists as a borderline figure because she lives on the boundary between childhood and adulthood. She also exists on a physical boundary - Yoshiwara, which ^{physically} exists on the edge of Edo and also embodies a place where two different worlds (the world of pleasure quarters and the world of the prosperous neighborhood) coexist.

Since Midori is situated on the boundary between these two worlds and ^{in both} communities and interacts with both of them, she is a borderline figure deeply involved in the world of the pleasure quarters (because of her association with her sister, a successful courtesan) and the world of the ordinary neighborhood around her, where she and her friends play. Midori is also a borderline figure in the sense that she, like Senri, is going through a transitional period, as she is crossing the border from childhood to adulthood.

Though in the beginning she is portrayed as merely a child who likes to play with her friends, ^{the world of} adulthood is already beginning to encroach on her. In preparation for the festival, she wears her best kimono and has her face done and powdered - as if she were going to the pleasure quarters as a courtesan - her socially established future occupation because of her sister. When she quits school, Midori spends even more time involving herself with the pleasure quarters and her sister, with an increasing dependence on her sister for her status as a courtesan. Though she does not yet know the implications of her "adult" role as a courtesan, Midori unknowingly and continuously goes back and forth between her child's play on the streets, and her involvement in the world of courtesans, work, and adulthood.

Even as a new child, from the very beginning Midori is being set up as a courtesan, which represents the unfavorable world of adulthood. At the end, she is still a child but is ^{harshly} thrust into the world of adulthood as she begins to realize the implications of her role. Both Senri and Midori embody the qualities of two distinctly separate worlds that don't often intersect, but because they are part of these two different worlds, they embody the rare coexistence of these two worlds that establishes both these characters as borderline figures. Midori struggles between the innocent, happy life of childhood and the encroaching harsh reality that growing up and becoming a working adult (and courtesan) brings. Meanwhile, Senri lives in a borderline, transitional period between traditional, premodern and modernized Japan.

Both characters embody two ^{times or} worlds, yet with their position as borderline figures comes a sense of loneliness or displacement, as they don't fully belong to either world.

Great job!!