

i About the Exam



EXAMINATION

Course code/-name: SFE21417 The Gothic, American Style

Date: 20 May 2019

Duration: 5 hours

Permitted aids: English-English-Dictionary

Lecturer: Dr Johanna Wagner

About the Examination:

The assignment consists of two sections; Short Answer and Essay. Please answer **all** questions in the Short Answer section and choose **one** topic in the Essay section.

Date of announcement of the examination results: 11 June 2019

The examination results are available in Studentweb.

1 Short Answer

Answer **all** questions fully, but briefly (a paragraph or two at most). These are not essay questions, but you should write in your best academic English, and use full, grammatically correct sentences in your response. (50 points)

1.
Aesthetics is the study of or appreciation of art and beauty. Gothic texts, are informed by what Fred Botting calls negative aesthetics, a darker version of aesthetics in general that sometimes are exact opposites of our common ideas of what is valued in aesthetics. Thinking back to the short story "The Lottery," what negative aesthetics come to mind especially regarding atmosphere and setting? The story began so idyllically and beautifully, but then there was a change. Explain. Be as specific as possible. (5 points)

Write your answer here

2.
Transgressing boundaries is a common theme in Gothic texts. Discuss this idea and Hawthorne's short story "The Birthmark." What boundary (or boundaries) does Aylmer cross? How? Why? (5 points)

Write your answer here

3.

One way a contest of control plays out in Gothic texts is the appearance of a divided self. The protagonist with a divided self can be motivated by unconscious desires and irrational impulses. Briefly discuss this idea in relation to Poe's "Tell-Tale Heart." (5 points)

Write your answer here

4.

Explain the idea of the Sublime and the emotions it evokes. Be as specific as you can. You may use examples from any of the texts we read for class. (5 points)

Write your answer here

5.

Explain the idea of the Uncanny and the emotions it evokes. Be as specific as you can. You may use examples from any of the texts we read for class. (5 points)

Write your answer here

6.

Since *The Turn of the Screw* was published in 1898, there are two arguing factions who disagree about how to read the novel: the Apparitionists and the Non-Apparitionists. Briefly explain what both sides believe and why this argument will most likely not end. (5 points)

Write your answer here

7.

In the U.S. Gothic tradition, the Southern Gothic is quite distinct. Discuss the Southern Gothic by naming and explaining at least three of its characteristics. (5 points)

Write your answer here

8.

Explain the term "Grotesque" and discuss it briefly in terms of Faulkner's novel *As I Lay Dying*. Characters who may help you in your discussion. Bundren family: Addie (mother), Anse (father), Cash (eldest, carpenter), Darl (mentally unstable), Jewel (wild; buys a horse), Dewey Dell (pregnant), Vardaman (youngest, traumatized,

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possibly mentally slow). (5 points)

Write your answer here

9.
The Bourgeois Family is a site of ghostly returns in the 19th century, exemplified by the hauntings in *The Turn of the Screw*. Explain briefly what is haunting this family (the governess and the children) and why. (5 points)

Write your answer here

10.
Gothic spaces and places have always been integral to the Gothic as a genre. Using the short story "August 2026: There Will Come Soft Rains," briefly discuss how this space is presented as Gothic to the reader. (5 points)

Write your answer here

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2 Essay

Write an essay on **ONE** of the topics provided. The essay does not need to be a certain length, but it must develop your points well to make a strong argument. **REMEMBER:** The material you use should come from the course. Define your terms. A strong thesis should guide your work. The parts of an essay are important. Examples are necessary.

1.

The Gothic is known to transgress boundaries: geographical boundaries (land), social boundaries (what is proper socially, etc.), sexual boundaries (what is proper sexually), gender boundaries (what things are proper to engage in as a woman or a man), moral boundaries (what is right or wrong), etc. Using the idea of transgression, discuss the two main characters of the novel *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, Merricat and Constance. What kind of boundaries do these sisters transgress? How? Why? What are the consequences of these transgressions on them? On others?

2.

Paradise by Toni Morrison is a text that reaches back into the haunted past of the United States. Idealized ideas surrounding The Frontier, Rugged Individualism, Religion, and Race all come together in the town of Ruby to create discomfort for its citizens and at times drive their abhorrent actions. Morrison never explicitly passes judgment on the actions of the most prominent citizens (the twins Deek and Steward Morgan), but all of their idealism lead them to one final problematic situation (the climax of the text). Deek and Steward believe their bloody actions will be a solution for the dying town, that will keep it alive. But, instead it only signals its further degradation. Discuss any of the ideals mentioned above in the context of *Paradise* (you do not have to use all of them).

Other characters who might be of importance are the wives of the twins (Soane and Dovey), Mother (who ran the Convent when it was an orphanage, and who raised Consolata), Consolata or Connie (who is blind and runs the Convent after Mother dies), and all the Convent women.

Write your essay here

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