

i Information



EXAMINATION

Course code: SFE21213

Course: Introduction to Colonial and Postcolonial Literature

Date: 2 December 2019

Duration: 5 Hours

Permitted sources: English – English Dictionary

Lecturers: Melanie Duckworth

The examination:

The examination consists of 2 Sections. Answer both parts.

Date of announcement of the examination results: 23 December 2019

The examination results are available in the Studentweb.

1 Short Answer 50%

Answer five of the following questions. Mark them clearly with the question number. Answers should be 3-4 sentences long. (But can be slightly shorter or longer if you wish.)

1. In *The Secret River*, how are plants involved in the colonial endeavor?
2. What are Chinua Achebe's main criticisms of *The Heart of Darkness*?
3. Dipaka Nath writes: "Stories about feral children, as about animals, most often divulge more about the political and cultural contexts in which they are written and read, and little about the ostensible subjects of the stories themselves." What do Rudyard Kipling's "Mowgli" stories reveal about the colonial context in which they were written?
4. Postcolonial criticism and ecocriticism have been described as 'reading practices'. What does this mean?
5. Patricia Grace has described *Potiki* as taking the structure of a traditional *whaikorero*, a formal speech. Explain what this means and (briefly) describe the effect it has on the novel as a whole.
6. Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* has been accused of taking part in the 'history wars'. What were the 'history wars'? What do you think the role of historical novels (and films) should be in a postcolonial context, and how is their role different from more scholarly approaches to history?
7. Explain the concept of "colonial discourse".
8. In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the Magistrate adopts a small fox for a while: "They will say I keep two wild animals in my rooms, a fox and a girl." She does not see the joke, or does not like it.' Comment on this incident from postcolonial and ecocritical perspectives.
9. Comment on the language and meaning of the title: *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the lower Niger*.
10. Comment on Kathleen Jamie's approaches to imperialism and history in "Glacial" (provided in the appendix). If you also choose to write an essay on her poems, however, make sure you do not repeat yourself.

Skriv ditt svar her...

2 Essay (50%)

Answer one of the following questions.

As part of your answer, refer to at least one theory or theoretical text we have discussed this semester.

The essay does not need to be a certain length, but must develop your points sufficiently to make your argument. It must be an essay, with an introduction containing a thesis statement, body paragraphs which progress your argument, and a conclusion.

1. “Personally, I’ve given up even trying to write in Scots. But I want to. I long to. It’s the most intimate, heart-felt speech I have. It’s also wild and diverse and scunneratious and un-establishment. Some folk want to keep it that way, and not have it become established and government-sanctioned and spelled correctly. Some folk prefer it unfixed, unteachable, like a sparrowhawk, or a bunch of splashing starlings. But the problems defeat me. I mean the problems of legitimacy, as much as readability. Can you use words snipped out of the dictionary, or do you have to hear them alive and in flight before you can bring them into a poem? If your Scots is pulled together from hither and yon, from the living and the dead, from books and dictionaries, then it’s “synthetic,” which is wrong, apparently. (Remind me why again? Oh aye – because no one ever spoke like that. But no one ever spoke like King Lear.) If “synthetic” is illegitimate we’re all reduced to the language we half-learned as a wean/bairn/child. (But at what age did I learn the word “nuance?”)”

Kathleen Jamie

What is Jamie arguing in this paragraph? How does she make use of Scots in *The Bonniest Companie*, and how is the problem of authenticity and indigenous languages approached in other texts we have read this semester? (Remember to structure your answer into an essay with an argument and a thesis statement, not just a list of observations.)

Or

How are postcolonial and ecocritical themes entwined in Kathleen Jamie's *The Bonniest Companie*? Refer to at least four poems as part of your discussion.

2. In his poem “Waiting for the Barbarians”, C. P. Cavafy writes that ‘they were, those people, a kind of solution’. Make an argument in which you discuss the poem itself (provided) and how its insights relate to any of the texts we have discussed this semester.
3. Rivers figure prominently in both *The Heart of Darkness* and *The Secret River*, which juxtapose, respectively, the Congo and the Hawksbury rivers with the Thames. Using the provided quotation from *The Heart of Darkness* as a starting point, discuss the significance of rivers in both texts.

Skriv ditt svar her...

i Appendix

Kathleen Jamie – poems from *The Bonniest Companie*

(If you are writing an essay about Jamie, there is no need to refer to ALL of these poems, but I wanted to provide you with a selection. Feel free also to mention poems from the collection that I didn't manage to include here.)

Glacial

A thousand-foot slog, then a cairn of old stones —
hand-shifted labour,
and much the same river, shining
way below

as the Romans came, saw,
and soon thought the better of.

Too many mountains, too many
wanchancy tribes
whose habits we wouldn't much care for
(but could probably match),
too much grim north, too much faraway snow.

Let's bide here a moment, catching our breath
and inhaling the sweet scent of whatever
whin-bush is flowering today

and see for miles, all the way hence
to the lynx's return, the re-established wolf's.

Corporation Road I

One night, in my father's arms
I was carried from our brick-built semi,
shown the stars above the steelworks glare.

Corporation Road II

On my red swing I swept
high as its iron
chains allowed, the sky

I rushed toward disdained
to gather me; I birded up,
dizzied by its blue, its ungovernable clouds –

come back, said the Earth
I have your shadow.

Eyrie I

I was feart we'd lost the falcons
and the falcons' eyrie
from the whinstone quarry back o the town
– their favoured plinth
vacant so long
grasses had raised
thin flags over it, and winter rain
washed away their mutes,
but here she is! Conjured out of the drizzle
and March mist, her yellow claws
a holdfast on the rock's edge –
her eye all-seeing

as she planes away again
over our rooftops and the firth.

Eyrie II

That wind again, fit to flay you –
 like pages snatched
 clouds flit west,
with all that's written there, heartfelt, raw –
The street-lamps sift their small light down
 on a wakeful street,
a slate slips, wheelie-bins coup
 and three fields away, a branch
on a Scots pine snaps,
 and down falls cradle and all.

What will the osprey do then, poor things
when they make it home?

Build it up again, sticks and twigs –
 big a new ane.

The Hinds

Walking in a waking dream
I watched nineteen deer
pour from ridge to glen-floor,
then each in turn leap,
leap the new-raised
peat-dark burn. This
was the distaff side;
hinds at their ease, alive
to lands held on long lease
in their animal minds,
and filing through a breached
never-mended dyke,
the herd flowed up over
heather-slopes to scree
where they stopped, and turned to stare,
the foremost with a queenly air
as though to say: *Aren't we
the bonniest companie?
Come to me,
You'll be happy, but never go home.*

Solstice I

A late boat draws a wake upstream.
 A 90s anthem
– stadium rock – pulses from a neighbour's window,

while four or five gardens down
 the reek of a bonfire rises
toward an overcast sky, dimming now
 but for an amber swathe miles long,
west-north-west above the Sidlaws.

Daylight's at full reach, and still has business here,
or so it thinks –
 but the town's swifts are hid
 under their mysterious eaves
and it's gey near midnight. Then it's over –
midsummer: one fewer of our portion,
 one less left in the jar.

23/9/14

So here we are,
 dingit doon and weary,
happed in tattered hopes
 (an honest poverty).
Wir flags are wede awa,
 the withered leaves o shilpit trees
blaw across deserted squares,
 and the wind
 – harbinger of winter –
quests round the granite statues
 – and so on and etcetera.
We ken a' that. It's Tuesday. On wir feet.
Today we begin again.

Migratory II

eftir Hölderlin

As the burds gang faur
he lurks aye aheid
the prince o them, and caller

agin his breast
blaws aa he meets wi
i the heich,
 the quate o the lift

but ablo, his braw lands
lie bienly shinin

– and flittin wi him: hauflins
ettlin for the furst time
tae win furrit

but wi cannie wind-straiks,
he lowns them.

Note to Migratory II: A fragment by Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) translated into English by Michael Hamburger:

As slowly birds migrate/ He looks ahead/ The prince, and coolly blows/ Against his breast all he meets with
when/ There's silence round about him, high/ up in the air, but richly shining below him/ Lies his estate of
regions, and with him, for/ The first time seeking victory, are the young/ But with his windbeats/ He moderates.

Gale

Whit seek ye here?

There's nought hid i' wir skelly lums

bar jaikies' nests.

The Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad

Forthwith a change came over the waters, and the serenity became less brilliant but more profound. The old river in its broad reach rested unruffled at the decline of day, after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks, spread out in the tranquil dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth. We looked at the venerable stream not in the vivid flush of a short day that comes and departs for ever, but in the august light of abiding memories. And indeed nothing is easier for a man who has, as the phrase goes, "followed the sea" with reverence and affection, that to evoke the great spirit of the past upon the lower reaches of the Thames. The tidal current runs to and fro in its unceasing service, crowded with memories of men and ships it had borne to the rest of home or to the battles of the sea. It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled--the great knights-errant of the sea. It had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time, from the Golden Hind returning with her rotund flanks full of treasure, to be visited by the Queen's Highness and thus pass out of the gigantic tale, to the Erebus and Terror, bound on other conquests-- and that never returned. It had known the ships and the men. They had sailed from Deptford, from Greenwich, from Erith-- the adventurers and the settlers; kings' ships and the ships of men on 'Change; captains, admirals, the dark "interlopers" of the Eastern trade, and the commissioned "generals" of East India fleets. Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth! . . . The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires.

The sun set; the dusk fell on the stream, and lights began to appear along the shore. The Chapman light-house, a three-legged thing erect on a mud-flat, shone strongly. Lights of ships moved in the fairway--a great stir of lights going up and going down. And farther west on the upper reaches the place of the monstrous town was still marked ominously on the sky, a brooding gloom in sunshine, a lurid glare under the stars.

"And this also," said Marlow suddenly, "has been one of the dark places of the earth."

Waiting for the Barbarians

C. P. Cavafy

What are we waiting for, assembled in the forum?

The barbarians are due here today.

Why isn't anything happening in the senate?

Why do the senators sit there without legislating?

Because the barbarians are coming today.

What laws can the senators make now?

Once the barbarians are here, they'll do the legislating.

Why did our emperor get up so early,
and why is he sitting at the city's main gate
on his throne, in state, wearing the crown?

Because the barbarians are coming today

and the emperor is waiting to receive their leader.

He has even prepared a scroll to give him,

Why have our two consuls and praetors come out today
wearing their embroidered, their scarlet togas?
Why have they put on bracelets with so many amethysts,
and rings sparkling with magnificent emeralds?
Why are they carrying elegant canes
beautifully worked in silver and gold?

Because the barbarians are coming today
and things like that dazzle the barbarians.

Why don't our distinguished orators come forward as usual
to make their speeches, say what they have to say?

Because the barbarians are coming today
and they're bored by rhetoric and public speaking.

Why this sudden restlessness, this confusion?
(How serious people's faces have become.)
Why are the streets and squares emptying so rapidly,
everyone going home so lost in thought?

Because night has fallen and the barbarians have not come.
And some who have just returned from the border say
there are no barbarians any longer.

And now, what's going to happen to us without barbarians?
They were, those people, a kind of solution.

Translated by Edmund Keeley/Philip Sherrard

(C.P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems*. Translated by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard. Edited by George Savidis.
Revised Edition. Princeton University Press, 1992)