

Longer English Fiction I/Narrativas Longas I

LEM1514 – Semester 1 – 1518

Evaluation 2

Instructions: Please answer the questions on ANY TWO out of the FIVE writers dealt with below. Take care to write full sentences—with relative pronouns where necessary—and to articulate your ideas quite carefully in them since marks will be awarded for writing skills as well as for information and critical commentary. Don't hesitate to use internet resources but avoid outright plagiarism (i.e., the unattributed use of borrowed phrases). Aside from that, there is only one other rule that you must follow: *do not write about the author on whom you have made or are making a presentation in class.* (The reason is too obvious to mention!)

Marking scheme: 10 marks for each Comprehension Question; 20 marks for each Commentary Question:
(10+10+10+20) x 2 = 100%

FRANKENSTEIN BY MARY SHELLEY (1823)

Read the following passage and answer the questions below:

As I looked on him, his countenance expressed the utmost extent of malice and treachery. I thought with a sensation of madness on my promise of creating another like to him, and trembling with passion, tore to pieces the thing on which I was engaged.

[...]

“Shall each man,” cried he, “find a wife for his bosom, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone? I had feelings of affection, and they were requited by detestation and scorn. Man! you may hate; but beware! your hours will pass in dread and misery, and soon the bolt will fall which must ravish from you your happiness for ever. Are you to be happy while I grovel in the intensity of my wretchedness? You can blast my other passions; but revenge remains—revenge, henceforth dearer than light or food! I may die; but first you, my tyrant and tormentor, shall curse the sun that gazes on your misery. Beware; for I am fearless, and therefore powerful. I will watch with the wiliness of a snake, that I may sting with its venom. Man, you shall repent of the injuries you inflict.”

“Devil, cease; and do not poison the air with these sounds of malice. I have declared my resolution to you, and I am no coward to bend beneath words. Leave me; I am inexorable.”

“It is well. I go; but remember, I shall be with you on your wedding-night.”

I started forward, and exclaimed, “Villain! before you sign my death-warrant, be sure that you are yourself safe.”

I would have seized him; but he eluded me, and quitted the house with precipitation. In a few moments I saw him in his boat, which shot across the waters with an arrowy swiftness, and was soon lost amidst the waves.

All was again silent; but his words rung in my ears. I burned with rage to pursue the murderer of my peace and precipitate him into the ocean. I walked up and down my room hastily and perturbed, while my imagination conjured up a thousand images to torment and sting me. Why had I not followed him, and closed with him in mortal strife? But I had suffered him to depart, and he had directed his course towards the main land. I shuddered to think who might be the next victim sacrificed to his insatiate revenge. And then I thought again of his words—“I will be with you on your wedding-night.” That then was the period fixed for the fulfilment of my destiny. In that hour I should die, and at once satisfy and extinguish his malice. The prospect did not move me to fear; yet when I thought of my beloved Elizabeth,—of her tears and endless sorrow, when she should find her lover so barbarously snatched from her,—tears, the first I had shed for many months, streamed from my eyes, and I resolved not to fall before my enemy without a bitter struggle. “

COMPREHENSION

1. The narrator of the above passage is Frankenstein and the first speaker is the 'creature' who is reacting to the fact that Frankenstein has just destroyed the female he was making as a companion for the creature. Why did Frankenstein destroy the female? _____

(10)

2. "Shall each man find a wife for his bosom?" What is the significance of the question which the creature asks in these words and what are his feelings? _____

(10)

3. "I shall be with you on your wedding-night." Why does Frankenstein think the creature means by this threat, and how does the creature actually fulfil it? _____

(10)

COMMENTARY

Critics agree that Victor Frankenstein has committed a grave crime in creating his 'monster'. According to Robert Kiely, his "hubris lies not in his usurping the creative power of God, but in his attempt to usurp the power of women." Do you agree? State your opinion of matter, referring to at least one episode in the text.

(20)

JANE EYRE BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË (1847)

Read the following passage and answer the questions below:

"[...] On waking, a gleam dazzled my eyes; I thought—Oh, it is daylight! But I was mistaken; it was only candlelight. Sophie, I supposed, had come in. There was a light in the dressing-table, and the door of the closet, where, before going to bed, I had hung my wedding-dress and veil, stood open; I heard a rustling there. I asked, 'Sophie, what are you doing?' No one answered; but a form emerged from the closet; it took the light, held it aloft, and surveyed the garments pendent from the portmanteau. [...] My blood crept cold through my veins. Mr. Rochester, this was not Sophie, it was not Leah, it was not Mrs. Fairfax: it was not—no, I was sure of it, and am still—it was not even that strange woman, Grace Poole."

"It must have been one of them," interrupted my master.

"No, sir, I solemnly assure you to the contrary. The shape standing before me had never crossed my eyes within the precincts of Thornfield Hall before; the height, the contour were new to me."

"Describe it, Jane."

"It seemed, sir, a woman, tall and large, with thick and dark hair hanging long down her back. I know not what dress she had on: it was white and straight; but whether gown, sheet, or shroud, I cannot tell."

"Did you see her face?"

"Not at first. But presently she took my veil from its place; she held it up, gazed at it long, and then she threw it over her own head, and turned to the mirror. At that moment I saw the reflection of the visage and features quite distinctly in the dark oblong glass."

"And how were they?"

"Fearful and ghastly to me—oh, sir, I never saw a face like it! It was a discoloured face—it was a savage face. I wish I could forget the roll of the red eyes and the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments!"

"Ghosts are usually pale, Jane."

"This, sir, was purple: the lips were swelled and dark; the brow furrowed: the black eyebrows widely raised over the bloodshot eyes. Shall I tell you of what it reminded me?"

"You may."

"Of the foul German spectre—the Vampyre."

"Ah!—what did it do?"

"Sir, it removed my veil from its gaunt head, rent it in two parts, and flinging both on the floor, trampled on them."

"Afterwards?"

"It drew aside the window-curtain and looked out; perhaps it saw dawn approaching, for, taking the candle, it retreated to the door. Just at my bedside, the figure stopped: the fiery eyes glared upon me—she thrust up her candle close to my face, and extinguished it under my eyes. I was aware her lurid visage flamed over mine, and I lost consciousness."

COMPREHENSION

1. The speaker is Jane Eyre. Has she seen a ghost? If not, what has she seen in her bedroom and what was the phantom-figure doing there? _____

_____ (10)

2. Why does Mr Rochester's respond the way he does, given that he knows who or what it is that invaded Jane's room? _____

_____ (10)

3. What is the final fate of the apparition, glimpsed here by Jane Eyre and later seen 'grovell[ing ..] on all fours [...] like some strange wild animal [...] covered with clothing and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane [which] hid its head and face.' _____

_____ (10)

COMMENTARY

In *The Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) Jan Rhys, a Caribbean novelist, tells the story of Mr Rochester's first wife Bertha who was given to him by her sugar-estate owning parents as a part of a commercial deal. In view of that tragic fact, what do you make of Mr Rochester's love for Jane Eyre who is employed as a governess in his house Thornfield? Use any information you may possess about his sexual and emotional history in answering this question.

_____ (20)

WUTHERING HEIGHTS BY EMILY BRONTË (1847)

Read the following passage and answer the questions below:

‘She’s dead!’ he said; ‘I’ve not waited for you to learn that. Put your handkerchief away—don’t snivel before me. Damn you all! she wants none of your tears!’ [...]

‘Yes, she’s dead!’ I answered, checking my sobs and drying my cheeks. ‘Gone to heaven, I hope; where we may, every one, join her, if we take due warning and leave our evil ways to follow good!’

‘Did *she* take due warning, then?’ asked Heathcliff, attempting a sneer. ‘Did she die like a saint? Come, give me a true history of the event. How did—?’ He endeavoured to pronounce the name, but could not manage it; and compressing his mouth he held a silent combat with his inward agony, defying, meanwhile, my sympathy with an unflinching, ferocious stare. ‘How did she die?’ he resumed, at last—fain, notwithstanding his hardihood, to have a support behind him; for, after the struggle, he trembled, in spite of himself, to his very finger-ends.

‘Poor wretch!’ I thought; ‘you have a heart and nerves the same as your brother men! Why should you be anxious to conceal them? Your pride cannot blind God! You tempt him to wring them, till he forces a cry of humiliation.’

‘Quietly as a lamb!’ I answered, aloud. ‘She drew a sigh, and stretched herself, like a child reviving, and sinking again to sleep; and five minutes after I felt one little pulse at her heart, and nothing more!’

‘And—did she ever mention me?’ he asked, hesitating, as if he dreaded the answer to his question would introduce details that he could not bear to hear.

‘Her senses never returned: she recognised nobody from the time you left her,’ I said. ‘She lies with a sweet smile on her face; and her latest ideas wandered back to pleasant early days. Her life closed in a gentle dream—may she wake as kindly in the other world!’

‘May she wake in torment!’ he cried, with frightful vehemence, stamping his foot, and groaning in a sudden paroxysm of ungovernable passion. ‘Why, she’s a liar to the end! Where is she? Not *there*—not in heaven—not perished—where? Oh! you said you cared nothing for my sufferings! And I pray one prayer—I repeat it till my tongue stiffens—Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living; you said I killed you—haunt me, then! The murdered *do* haunt their murderers, I believe. I know that ghosts *have* wandered on earth. Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad! only *do* not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh, God! it is unutterable! I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul!’

COMPREHENSION

1. Who is dead, and under what circumstances has she died? _____

_____ (10)

2. Who is the speaker and why does he speak of the dead woman in such seemingly hostile terms?

_____ (10)

3. Who is the narrator, to whom is she speaking, and how has she comes to know so much about the two characters referred to here? _____

_____ (10)

COMMENTARY

The narrator speaks of Heathcliff as a 'poor wretch' in apparent sympathy for his plight. What is your conception of this character at the heart of *Wuthering Heights* whose extreme and feelings of intense love and jealousy for his childhood company Cathy provides the motive force of Emily Brontë's great romantic novel? You may recount his family origins and discuss his psychology in relation to them, or treat him as a 'force of nature' *sui generis*, as you wish.

_____ (20)

GREAT EXPECTATIONS BY CHARLES DICKENS (1861)

Read the following passage and answer the questions below:

[Miss Havesham adopted daughter has told young Pip that his hands are coarse and his boots are common—signs of ill-breeding. Now she has been instructed to feed him by Miss Havesham.]

“You are to wait here, you boy,” said Estella; and disappeared and closed the door.

I took the opportunity of being alone in the courtyard to look at my coarse hands and my common boots. My opinion of those accessories was not favourable. They had never troubled me before, but they troubled me now, as vulgar appendages. I determined to ask Joe why he had ever taught me to call those picture-cards ‘Jacks’, which ought to be called ‘knaves’. I wished Joe had been rather more genteelly brought up, and then I should have been so too.

She came back, with some bread and meat and a little mug of beer. She put the mug down on the stones of the yard, and gave me the bread and meat without looking at me, as insolently as if I were a dog in disgrace. I was so humiliated, hurt, spurned, offended, angry, sorry,—I cannot hit upon the right name for the smart—God knows what its name was,—that tears started to my eyes. The moment they sprang there, the girl looked at me with a quick delight in having been the cause of them. This gave me power to keep them back and to look at her: so, she gave a contemptuous toss—but with a sense, I thought, of having made too sure that I was so wounded—and left me.

[...]

My sister’s bringing up had made me sensitive. In the little world in which children have their existence whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt as injustice. It may be only small injustice that the child can be exposed to; but the child is small, and its world is small, and its rocking-horse stands as many hands high, according to scale, as a big-boned Irish hunter. Within myself, I had sustained, from my babyhood, a perpetual conflict with injustice. I had known, from the time when I could speak, that my sister, in her capricious and violent coercion, was unjust to me. I had cherished a profound conviction that her bringing me up by hand gave her no right to bring me up by jerks. Through all my punishments, disgraces, fasts, and vigils, and other penitential performances, I had nursed this assurance; and to my communing so much with it, in a solitary and unprotected way, I in great part refer the fact that I was morally timid and very sensitive. I got rid of my injured feelings for the time by kicking them into the brewery wall, and twisting them out of my hair, and then I smoothed my face with my sleeve, and came from behind the gate. The bread and meat were acceptable, and the beer was warming and tingling, and I was soon in spirits to look about me.

COMPREHENSION

1. Write a short account of ONE of the following characters in *Great Expectations*: Pip; Joe Gargery; Mrs Gargery; Mr. Pumblechook; Miss Havesham; Estella; Mr Jaggers; Able Magwitch; Bentley Drummle; Biddy, or Matthew Pocket. _____

_____ (10)

2. “I had sustained from my babyhood, a perpetual conflict with injustice”: in what form and from whose hands had Pip experienced injustice? _____

(10)

3. Later we learn that Estella has been trained to make men and boys feel miserable through her beauty. What can you say about her place in Pip's story from this point onwards? _____

(10)

COMMENTARY

Estella is the daughter of Magwitch and Molly (the servant of Miss Haversham's lawyer Jaggers), as it turns out later in the novel. Pip is the beneficiary of a money settled on him by Magwitch who is the sworn enemy of Compeyson—the fellow-convict who, it also turns out, formerly jilted Miss Haversham on her wedding day. Write a brief account of Pip's relationship with Magwitch and how it influences his moral development from start to finish.

(20)

THE MILL ON THE FLOSS BY GEORGE ELIOT (1860)

Read the following passage and answer the questions below:

[*Stephen Guest has persuaded Maggie Tulliver to elope with him much against her will, though her attraction to him is strong. Now they are together on a boat heading for Mudport and their conflicting view of the situation begins to become plain.*]

[...]

The sun was rising now, and Maggie started up with the sense that a day of resistance was beginning for her. Her eyelashes were still wet with tears, as, with her shawl over her head, she sat looking at the slowly rounding sun. Something roused Stephen too, and getting up from his hard bed, he came to sit beside her. The sharp instinct of anxious love saw something to give him alarm in the very first glance. He had a hovering dread of some resistance in Maggie's nature that he would be unable to overcome. He had the uneasy consciousness that he had robbed her of perfect freedom yesterday; there was too much native honour in him, for him not to feel that, if her will should recoil, his conduct would have been odious, and she would have a right to reproach him.

But Maggie did not feel that right; she was too conscious of fatal weakness in herself, too full of the tenderness that comes with the foreseen need for inflicting a wound. She let him take her hand when he came to sit down beside her, and smiled at him, only with rather a sad glance; she could say nothing to pain him till the moment of possible parting was nearer. And so they drank their cup of coffee together, and walked about the deck, and heard the captain's assurance that they should be in at Mudport by five o'clock, each with an inward burthen; but in him it was an undefined fear, which he trusted to the coming hours to dissipate; in her it was a definite resolve on which she was trying silently to tighten her hold. Stephen was continually, through the morning, expressing his anxiety at the fatigue and discomfort she was suffering, and alluded to landing and to the change of motion and repose she would have in a carriage, wanting to assure himself more completely by presupposing that everything would be as he had arranged it. For a long while Maggie contented herself with assuring him that she had had a good night's rest, and that she didn't mind about being on the vessel,—it was not like being on the open sea, it was only a little less pleasant than being in a boat on the Floss. But a suppressed resolve will betray itself in the eyes, and Stephen became more and more uneasy as the day advanced, under the sense that Maggie had entirely lost her passiveness. He longed, but did not dare, to speak of their marriage, of where they would go after it, and the steps he would take to inform his father, and the rest, of what had happened. He longed to assure himself of a tacit assent from her. But each time he looked at her, he gathered a stronger dread of the new, quiet sadness with which she met his eyes. And they were more and more silent. "Here we are in sight of Mudport," he said at last. "Now, dearest," he added, turning toward her with a look that was half beseeching, "the worst part of your fatigue is over. On the land we can command swiftness. In another hour and a half we shall be in a chaise together, and that will seem rest to you after this."

Maggie felt it was time to speak; it would only be unkind now to assent by silence. She spoke in the lowest tone, as he had done, but with distinct decision.

"We shall not be together; we shall have parted."

The blood rushed to Stephen's face.

COMPREHENSION

1. What is the literal sense of the title of *The Mill on the Floss* and in what way does function as a symbol for social and historical conditions in the contemporary English rural world where it is set?

(10)

2. Each of them heard the news that the ship would soon reach its destination ‘with an inward burthen’. What, in your view, is troubling Maggie Tulliver at this point in the novel? _____

(10)

3. Explain in your own words why ‘the blood rushed to Stephen’s face’ at the end of the above passage? _____

(10)

COMMENTARY

Terry Eagleton has written of *Mill on the Floss*: “If Tom and the lower-middle-class Dodsons are pre-modern characters, living by unreflective custom, Maggie is a prototypically modern protagonist, rebellious, self-questioning, restless with restriction, and in passionate pursuit of her own fulfilment. [...] Tom and the Dodsons [...] practise the stout petty-bourgeois virtues of thrift, honesty, loyalty, industriousness and obligations to kinsfolk. But they could never have written the novel, as one suspects Maggie could have done.” Taking this as your starting-point, discuss why George Eliot decides to ‘kill’ Maggie along with Tom in the final chapter.

(20)