

American Literature Final Exam Review

Literature

- **Ambrose Bierce** – “Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”
 - The whole story is just split seconds, but is elongated by Bierce as the main character Peyton Farquhar is hanged.
 - Peyton Farquhar - A thirty-five-year-old Southern planter. A prosperous land- and slave-owner from an esteemed Alabama family, Farquhar is a civilian and an ardent supporter of the Confederacy. He assumes a kind expression at his execution, despite the grimness of his situation. Well-dressed, with large gray eyes and a pointed beard, he cuts a striking figure on the side of the bridge, a gentleman about to face a less-than-noble end.
 - Imagines that rope breaks and he runs away to his house. As he walks toward the house, his wife steps down from the verandah to meet him.
 - He moves to embrace her but feels a sharp blow on the back of his neck and sees a blinding white light all about him.
 - Then silence and darkness engulf him. Farquhar is dead, his broken body actually swinging from the side of the Owl Creek bridge.
- **Shirley Jackson** – “The Lottery”
 - **The whole point of the story is that people hold on to traditions for the wrong reasons.**
 - **The lottery represents tradition that shouldn't be held onto anymore.**
 - **Holding onto tradition for the sake of tradition is irrational.**
 - **Sometimes traditions give us pleasure, but if it gives us pain/conflict, you need to reevaluate the tradition.**
 - The story starts out hopeful. It takes place in a normal suburban town with a Caste Society. It is a Provincial and Conventional world = unsophisticated.
 - The men and women were depicted in the same way. Men were working, while the women were at home tending to their domestic responsibilities.
 - The villagers treat the black box with care, as a sacred thing.
 - The population was growing, so they used paper slips instead of wooden chips

- The lottery is different than it used to be because it is larger. Also people are starting to question the lottery.
- Old Man Warner doesn't want to let go: has been lucky for never dying.
- 1 person is killed each year (sacrificed) in a violent way – stoned to death
- It is a bit of a witch-hunt with a scapegoat (punished for sins of other) – as everyone's sins of the year die with the person.
- "Lottery in June. Corn be heavy soon" – Indicates the flaw in the logic as to why people continue the tradition. It is not a farmer heavy town, but a rural Mass. Town.
- Jackson
- chose the mother because she represents the caretaker, nurturer, and the source of renewal.
- Davie stoned his own mother. He represents youth.
- Schadenfreude– concept that its better if someone else gets punished instead of you.
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- **Ernest Hemingway – "Big Two-Hearted River"**
 - Hemingway's Code of Honor
 1. Accept that life is absurd.
 2. You must have courage in the face of that absurdity – poses question: Will you have courage to face the absurdity?
 3. Your ideology/assumptions about life must be put to the existential test. – test asks *why?* over and over again. You will have to defend/prove what you declare b/c life will demand that you declare.
 4. As you meet this existential test, you have to show grace under pressure – if you meet this (all the requirements), you can be a hero.
 - Nick Adams – Bkgd Notes
 - Protagonist in Hemingway's novels, particularly war
 - Wounded physically coupled with the mental (physiological) wounds / trauma.
 - Nick's principle effort in the story is to remain objective – b/c has seen so much combat
 - Sees things in neutral way
 - He has been through a lot – war/seen things
 - Hemingway can only be classified as a hero if he met certain conditions.
 - The river is symbolic of Nick's problems

- Fish/Lot of life = symbolic
 - Nick w/ lease wants to cut off certain behaviors.
 - In the story, we see what he sees, but we aren't sure why.
 - Hemingway writes in glarier principle – 90% of what he writes is beneath the surface, and only 10% is visible.

- **Arthur Miller – The Crucible**
 - Look at Plot Overview, Characters, Character Analysis, Themes/Motifs/Symbols, Key Facts, and Quiz

- **Mark Twain – The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**
 - Realism
 - Twain and His Contribution to Realism
 - 1) Shapes way we speak – captures experience of youth through language
 - 2) New language emerge – Pre-Civil War South
 - 3) Gives us fantasy of childhood in it – the river is symbolic of freedom to Huck
 - 4) Ability to solve problems by coming up with solutions from own experiences – improvise solutions
 - The notice at the beginning is just the beginning of nothing being as it seems. The story will not turn out as it seems, and the story isn't about symbols.
 - 5) Incredible power of the moral message – In Huck Finn, it is the friendship w/ Huck and Tom, who have integrity and do what they say they will do.
 - (Realism in Literature – 5 things
 - 1) Not interested in symbols or allegory – ex. River in Huck Finn as freedom
 - 2) Doesn't put a great emphasis on plot and symmetry – more interested in how people live their lives
 - 3) Life is not arranged logically
 - 4) The language is realistic, not literary
 - 5) Realism is very much considered with precision.)
 - Satire – is to mock or make fun of: “humorous writing or speech intended to point out errors, falsehoods, foibles, or failings. It is written for the purpose of reforming human

behavior or human institutions. For ex. Huck says praying works for certain people, but not for him.

- Silent Lie – By lying, Huck saves himself and another person
 - **The silent lie/lie of silent assertion is lying by not doing anything about slavery**
 - No one was willing to speak out against slaver
 - Maintaining the lie sacrifices ones integrity
 - Ex. Huck ripping up letter to Mrs. Watson
 - Twain called all people liars, which was prod of the lie of silent assertion.

- Look at Plot Overview, Characters, Character Analysis, Themes/Motifs/Symbols, Key Facts, and Quiz

- **Walt Whitman** – Leaves of Grass
 - “Song of Myself”
 - The poem itself
 - Looks for inspiration from self rather than God (muses)
 - Says that that the same things that inspire him should inspire you
 - “What I am made of, you are made of”
 - Says “Somewhere in the grass there is a spirit.”
 - What he does to transform poetry – He writes in blank verse sometimes (unrhymed iambic pentameter). Most of the time he writes in free verse (doesn’t rhyme, but has rhythm). **His free verse is called a stream of consciousness, which is an enormous leap – it gets people to think in the same way.**
 - Free verse is his legacy
 - He is an exceptional artist, and does not lose audiences.
 - “Barbaric Yawp” – it is one of the senses including sight b/c you are reading the poem

- **J.D. Salinger** – The Catcher in the Rye
 - Coming of Age/Self-knowledge - In a particularly revealing moment Holden fantasizes life as a deaf-mute, a life that would free him from "useless conversation with any body" and force everyone to leave him alone. **Yet this fantasy indicates Holden's lack of self-knowledge, for his isolation would be an act, his deaf-muteness a pretense.**

He defines alienation as a job in a service station and a beautiful, deaf-mute wife to share his life. Therein lies the pathos of Holden Caulfield. He can neither commit to the inner world and its truths nor celebrate the genuine that exists amid the phoniness of the public world.

- Self-knowledge – (**The Catcher in the Rye**, for all its strength, **fails as a coming of age story precisely because its protagonist, who is terrified of change, never changes.**)
 - **Holden's Perceptions – Different criticisms/views**
 - **Not an honest perception/ depiction – not an honest picture of the world**
 - **Choosing not to form relationships – He brings stuff upon himself, being anti-social because he chooses to be anti-social. (Is not a victim)**
 - **People read it as an accurate/true depiction- they use Salinger's biography to prove it.**
 - ****** Question: Does he learn anything in the end?**
 - **In the end he is in a mental institution, which indicates he is getting help. He expects to attend another school in the fall.**
- Contrast between Phoebe and Holden
 - Holden – 16, Phoebe – 8
 - Holden seeks out acceptance of an 8 yr old – an immature source
 - She is not a phony, and he likes that about her
 - She is everything that he wants to be and why he hangs out with her and relaxes in her room
 - She reads fantasy and he admires her for that
 - He dances with her – she is a good dancer, which equated w/ her being physically and emotionally adept.
 - He admires her for lying for him, and gives her the hat.
 - Phoebe outstrips him in maturity and cuts through it and rationalized it saying dad will be extremely angry if he found out that he flunked out of school again.
 - Will not wear hat around her
 - Spends night at Mr. Antolini's
 - They meet at the museum and are going to hitchhike and go west

- Fantasizes about protection of young people with Phoebe as an example
- He doesn't want to expose her to the dangers of the world
- Allie
 - Good natured young boy
 - **The sweet nature of Allie is unattainable for Holden – Allie represents the unattainable**
 - Instead he mourns for Allie and is in cycle of destructive behavior and can't go back
 - Holden = mentally unstable, Allie – provides comparison of someone who is stable
 - Prays to Allie to not disappear – euphemism for dying
 - Missed Allie's funeral because of broken hand for punching window
- See Plot Overview, Characters, Character Analysis, Themes/Motifs/Symbols, Key Facts, and Quiz
- ***There is more of this (The Catcher in the Rye) on than the final exam than anything else**

Grammar

This section will be like the quizzes, but in the form of multiple choice on a Scantron.

- **Correct Use of Pronouns**
 - Uses of Who and whom – see packet/wksts
 - Nominative and Objective – see quiz/packet/wksts
- **Clauses**
 - Identifying and Classifying Subordinate and Independent clauses – together with subordinating conjunctions review - see quiz/review/packet
- **Subordinating Conjunctions** – Together with Subordinate and Independent clauses – See quiz/review/packet
- **6 Troublesome Verbs** – See quiz/charts/packet
 - **Lie and Lay**
 - **Sit and Set**
 - **Rise and Raise**
- No diagramming

The Research Paper

- Bibliographic Format
 - Given entries that are wrong and you have to fix them
 - See “IV. Developing a Preliminary Bibliography” and Practice
- Parenthetical Notation
 - We may have to insert parenthetical notation into an example
 - See “IX. Documentation of Sources” and Practice