

TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM

[worth 15% overall]

Due Date:

- **Monday, March 1st at 9am:** Send your essay as an attachment via e-mail to jcmeloni@gmail.com or julie_meloni@wsu.edu. The penalty for assignments submitted between 9am on Monday, March 1st and 9am on Monday, March 8th is 15% of the assignment grade.

Instructions:

In a new document, complete each of the essay questions below. Put all of your essays in one document. However, each essay should have its own title (Note: "Essay 1" is not a title) and works cited list. All essays should use standard MLA parenthetical citations to go with that works cited list.

Grading:

Each essay is worth 25 points. A target of 750 words per essay would be appropriate, although you're certainly welcome to write more.

The breakdown of points for each essay is as follows:

- structural mechanics (title, margins, citations, etc): 2 pts
- grammar/style mechanics: 3 pts
- introductory paragraph (context for argument): 5 pts
- quality and clarity of overall argument: 5 pts
- logical construction of essay and its conclusion: 10 pts

The Questions:

1. Although *Edgar Huntly* and *The Giaour* were written fifteen years apart and in (and about) different countries, the sense of the gothic and "the other" is pervasive in both. [Feel free to use this Wikipedia entry for a quick handle on "the other" <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Other>> and/or supplement your knowledge with this handout as well <<http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ulrich/rww03/othering.htm>>.] In this essay, discuss how each narrative relies on the concept of "othering" to move forward. Your overall guiding argument for your essay should be something along the lines of why that might be the case. In other words, simply observing that they do is the first step, and being able to answer "so what?" is the second step in making your argument.
2. Critics have argued that armed with knowledge of Emerson's lecture "The Transcendentalist" (and other Emersonian ideas), readers can better understand Herman Melville's characters in his short story, "Bartleby, the Scrivener." Although we did not read "The Transcendentalist," I am confident that you can make observations and an argument based on excerpts from "The Transcendentalist" and your own reading of "Bartleby." On the reverse of this sheet are some excerpts from "The Transcendentalist" (you are welcome to read all of it) that you can use as the basis for your discussion of the characters of Bartleby and the Lawyer: who is an Idealist and who is a Materialist? Who is a Transcendentalist (if anyone; if someone, why, and if no one, why not)?
3. Tales in the mode of Dark Romanticism remind us that guilt, sin, and evil are inherent qualities of humans, regardless of what the Transcendentalists might think about inherent divinity (and indeed, divinity does not mean perfection, does it? That's a rhetorical question.) Using either Edgar Poe's "Ligeia" <<http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/PoeLige.html>> or Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birth-Mark" <<http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/HawBirt.html>>, argue beyond a shadow of a doubt how your selected story is a perfect example of Dark Romanticism. This is like Blog Assignment #5 but in a more formal essay form (and with a different text).

4. This is a free-for-all essay, but with some rules. That is to say, you are free to make any argument you want (and can support) but you have to use at least *three* of the following texts:
- Wordsworth's "London, 1802", "Tintern Abbey"
 - Blake's "Infant Joy," "Infant Sorrow," "The Lamb," "The Tyger" [a Blake poem pair counts as one]
 - Shelley's "Stanzas Written in Dejection," "Ozymandias"
 - Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," "Ode to a Nightingale"
 - Thoreau's "Walking," "A Plea for Captain John Brown," "Autumnal Tints"
 - Fuller's "The Great Debate"
 - Ruskin's "Pre-Raphaelitism"
 - any of Rossetti's "Double Works" [a painting and sonnet count as one]
 - Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle*
 - Huxley's "Science and Culture"
 - Muir's "Wild Wool"

Excerpts from Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The Transcendentalist," A Lecture read at the Masonic Temple, Boston, January, 1842 (You are welcome to read and use the entire essay, found at <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/emerson/essays/transcendentalist.html>)

[...] What is popularly called Transcendentalism among us, is Idealism; Idealism as it appears in 1842. As thinkers, mankind have ever divided into two sects, Materialists and Idealists; the first class founding on experience, the second on consciousness; the first class beginning to think from the data of the senses, the second class perceive that the senses are not final, and say, the senses give us representations of things, but what are the things themselves, they cannot tell. The materialist insists on facts, on history, on the force of circumstances, and the animal wants of man; the idealist on the power of Thought and of Will, on inspiration, on miracle, on individual culture. These two modes of thinking are both natural, but the idealist contends that his way of thinking is in higher nature. He concedes all that the other affirms, admits the impressions of sense, admits their coherency, their use and beauty, and then asks the materialist for his grounds of assurance that things are as his senses represent them. But I, he says, affirm facts not affected by the illusions of sense, facts which are of the same nature as the faculty which reports them, and not liable to doubt; facts which in their first appearance to us assume a native superiority to material facts, degrading these into a language by which the first are to be spoken; facts which it only needs a retirement from the senses to discern. Every materialist will be an idealist; but an idealist can never go backward to be a materialist.

The idealist, in speaking of events, sees them as spirits. He does not deny the sensuous fact: by no means; but he will not see that alone. He does not deny the presence of this table, this chair, and the walls of this room, but he looks at these things as the reverse side of the tapestry, as the other end, each being a sequel or completion of a spiritual fact which nearly concerns him. This manner of looking at things, transfers every object in nature from an independent and anomalous position without there, into the consciousness. [...]

The materialist, secure in the certainty of sensation, mocks at fine-spun theories, at star-gazers & dreamers, & believes that his life is solid, that he at least takes nothing for granted, but knows where he stands, and what he does. Yet how easy it is to show him, that he also is a phantom walking and working amid phantoms, and that he need only ask a question or two beyond his daily questions, to find his solid universe growing dim & impalpable before his sense. [...]

It is well known to most of my audience, that the Idealism of the present day acquired the name of Transcendental, from the use of that term by Immanuel Kant, of Konigsberg, who replied to the skeptical philosophy of Locke, which insisted that there was nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the experience of the senses, by showing that there was a very important class of ideas, or imperative forms, which did not come by experience, but through which experience was acquired; that these were intuitions of the mind itself; and he denominated them Transcendental forms. The extraordinary profoundness and precision of that man's thinking have given vogue to his nomenclature, in Europe and America, to that extent, that whatever belongs to the class of intuitive thought, is popularly called at the present day Transcendental. [...]