



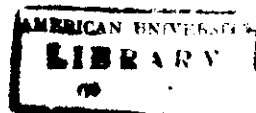
ENGL. 216

ENGLISH 216
MODERN AMERICAN DRAMA
FINAL EXAM

January 26, 2005/Prof. Myers

Please write your name and student # on the exam booklet before you begin. Write legibly, leave sufficient space in the margins for comments and corrections, and punctuate your text appropriately. Although this is not a composition exam, you should take care to spell correctly and to avoid simple grammar mistakes such as incorrect verb agreement. Remember, narrate events in the plays in present tense: i.e. "Loomis arrives at the boarding house. Bynum tells him a story." The exam should take approximately one hour and a half. If you need, you may use the entire two hours. When you are finished, you are welcome to leave. PLEASE TURN THIS PAGE IN WITH YOUR EXAM.

- I. IDENTIFICATION: CHOOSE 2 OF THE 3 PASSAGES. (50 minutes)
- Identify the play in which the passage appears. If you recall the act and scene, include this information. If not, locate the passage within the play. Is it at the beginning, in the middle, at the end? What happens just before and just after the passage?
 - What is the relationship between this passage and the rest of the play? Which issues, themes and formal elements do you notice in the scene? For example, briefly mention elements such as class, race, consumerism, irony, idiom, idiolect and metatheatre that are obvious in this scene.
 - Briefly describe the kind of language used in this scene. Point out figures of speech (symbol, metaphor, simile), other rhetorical aspects (idiom associated with a certain class or region) or other formal elements (gesture, music, lighting). Why are these figures of speech and formal elements used in this passage?
 - Briefly compare this scene to another scene in another play we have read so far this semester. What do the scenes share? How do they differ?
- II. ESSAY: CHOOSE 1 OF THE 2 QUESTIONS. (40 minutes)
- Alcohol appears repeatedly as both theme and subject matter in many of the plays we have read. Discuss drinking, alcohol, drunkenness and drinking establishments in at least four of the plays we have read. Some of the elements you may wish to include in your discussion are: escape, illusion/reality, alcohol as magic elixir, alcohol consumption and class, alcohol and truth-telling.
 - The so-called "American Dream" appears in the 20th century American theatre in various manifestations. Using at least four of the plays we have read this semester, discuss dreams as both thematic material and formal elements in the play. Some of the elements you may wish to include in your discussion are: the American myth of the self-made man (or woman), individualism, the new consumer society, race, the dream of escape, the myth of the American west as a frontier to be conquered, and illusions and self-delusions.



AUSTIN: What? You mean mine? He's going to drop mine and do yours instead?

LEE: *(smiles)* Now look, Austin, it's jest beginner's luck ya' know. I mean I sank a fifty foot putt for this deal. No hard feelings.

(AUSTIN goes to phone on wall, grabs it, starts dialing)

He's not gonna' be in, Austin. Told me he wouldn't be in 'till late this afternoon.

AUSTIN: *(stays on phone, dialing, listens)* I can't believe this. I just can't believe it. Are you sure he said that? Why would he drop mine?

LEE: That's what he told me.

AUSTIN: He can't do that without telling me first. Without talking to me at least. He wouldn't just make a decision like that without talking to me!

LEE: Well I was kinda' surprised myself. But he was real enthusiastic about my story.

(AUSTIN hangs up phone violently, paces)

AUSTIN: What'd he say! Tell me everything he said!

LEE: I been tellin' ya'! He said he liked the story a whole lot. It was the first authentic Western to come along in a decade.

AUSTIN: He liked that story! Your story?

LEE: Yeah! What's so surprisin' about that?

AUSTIN: It's stupid! It's the dumbest story I ever heard in my life.

LEE: Hey, hold on! That's my story yer talkin' about!

AUSTIN: It's a bullshit story! It's idiotic. Two lamebrains chasing each other across Texas! Are you kidding? Who do you think's going to go see a film like that?

LEE: It's not a film! It's a movie. There's a big difference. That's somethin' Saul told me.

AUSTIN: Oh he did, huh?

LEE: Yeah, he said, "In this business we make movies, American movies. Leave the films to the French."

AUSTIN: So you got real intimate with old Saul huh? He started pouring forth his vast knowledge of Cinema.

LEE: I think he liked me a lot, to tell ya' the truth. I think he felt I was somebody he could confide in.

AUSTIN: What'd you do, beat him up or something?

LEE: *(stands fast)* Hey, I've about had it with the insults buddy! You think yer the only one in the brain department here? Yer the only one that can sit around and cook things up? There's other people got ideas too, ya' know!

AUSTIN: You must've done something. Threatened him or something. Now what'd you do Lee?

LEE: I convinced him!

(LEE makes sudden menacing lunge toward AUSTIN, wielding golf club above his head, stops himself, frozen moment, long pause, LEE lowers club)

AUSTIN: Oh, Jesus. You didn't hurt him did you?

(long silence, LEE sits back down at table)

Lee! Did you hurt him?

GEORGE

(Claps his hands together, once, loud)

I've got it! I'll tell you what game we'll play. We're done with Humiliate the Host . . . this round, anyway . . . we're done with that . . . and we don't want to play Hump the Hostess, yet . . . not yet . . . so I know what we'll play. . . . We'll play a round of Get the Guests. How about that? How about a little game of Get the Guests?

MARTHA

(Turning away, a little disgusted)

Jesus, George.

GEORGE

Book dropper! Child mentioner!

HONEY

I don't like these games.

NICK

Yeah. . . . I think maybe we've had enough of games, now. . . .

GEORGE

Oh, no . . . oh, no . . . we haven't. We've had only one game. . . . Now we're going to have another. You can't fly on one game.

NICK

I think maybe. . . .

GEORGE *(With great authority)*

SILENCE! *(It is respected)* Now, how are we going to play Get the Guests?

MARTHA

For God's sake, George. . . .

GEORGE

You be quiet!

(MARTHA shrugs)

I wonder. . . . I wonder. *(Puzzles . . . then. . . .)* O.K.! Well . . . Martha . . . in her indiscreet way . . . well, not really indiscreet, because Martha is a naive, at heart . . . anyway, Martha told you all about my first novel. True or false? Hunh? I mean, true or false that there ever was such a thing. HA! But, Martha told you about it . . . my first novel, my . . . memory book . . . which I'd sort of preferred she hadn't, but hell, that's blood under the bridge. BUT! what she didn't do . . . what Martha didn't tell you about is she didn't tell us all about my *second* novel.

(MARTHA looks at him with puzzled curiosity)

No, you didn't know about that, did you, Martha? About my second novel, true or false. True or false?

MARTHA *(Sincerely)*

No.

LOOMIS. Joe Turner let me loose and I felt all turned around inside. I just wanted to see your face to know that the world was still there. Make sure everything still in its place so I could reconnect myself together. I got there and you was gone, Martha.

MARTHA. *(Steps in to him.)* Herald ...

LOOMIS. Left my little girl motherless in the world.

(MARTHA recoils, goes to BERTHA for support.

BERTHA gives her a reassuring look. MARTHA turns back to LOOMIS. MATTIE turns away.)

MARTHA. I didn't leave her motherless, Herald. Reverend Tolliver wanted to move the church up North cause of all the trouble the colored folks was having down there. Nobody knew what was gonna happen traveling them roads. We didn't even know if we was gonna make it up here or not. I left her with my mama so she be safe. That was better than dragging her out on the road having to duck and hide from people. Wasn't no telling what was gonna happen to us. I didn't leave her motherless in the world. I been looking for you.

LOOMIS. I come up on Henry Thompson's place after seven years of living in hell, and all I'm looking to do is see your face.

MARTHA. *(Steps toward him. Gently and painfully.)* Herald, I didn't know if you was ever coming back. They told me Joe Turner had you and my whole world split half in two. My whole life shattered. It was like I had poured it in a cracked jar and it all leaked out the bottom. When it go like that there ain't nothing you can do to put it back together. You talking about Henry Thompson's place like I'm still gonna be there working the land by myself. How

I'm gonna do that? You wasn't gone but two months and Henry Thompson kicked me off his land and I ain't had no place to go but to my mama's I stayed and waited there for five years before I woke up one morning and decided that you was dead. Even if you weren't, you were dead to me. I wasn't gonna carry you with me no more. So I killed you in my heart. I buried you. I mourned you. And then I picked up what was left and went on to make life without you. I was a young woman with life at my beckon. I couldn't drag you behind me like a sack of cotton.

LOOMIS. *(Steps towards her.)* I just been waiting to look on your face to say my goodbye. That goodbye got so big at times, seem like it was gonna swallow me up. Like Jonah in the whale's belly I sat up in that goodbye for four years. That goodbye kept me out on the road searching. Not looking on women in their houses. It kept me bound up to the road. All the time the goodbye swelling up in my chest till I'm about to bust. Now that I see your face I can say my goodbye and make my own world. *(Turns, holds out his hand to ZONIA. She crosses to him, and takes his hand. He presents her to MARTHA.)* Martha ... here go your daughter. I tried to take care of her. See that she had something to eat. See that she was out of the elements. Whatever I know I tried to teach her. Now she need to learn from her mother whatever you got to teach her. That way she won't be no one-sided person. *(Crouches down, turns ZONIA to face him, his hands on her shoulders.)* Zonia, you go live with your mama. She a good woman. You go on with her and listen to her good. You my daughter and I love you like a daughter. I hope to see you again in the world somewhere. I'll never forget you.