

CS 207E  
EPIC: TEXTS AND CONTEXTS I (2 HOURS)  
FALL 2003-4 FINAL EXAM – DR WRISLEY  
21 JANUARY 2004

The exam is in two parts. No books or notes are to be used in answering the questions. Absolute silence is required in the room. Eyes on your own paper.

ANSWER QUESTIONS THAT TOUCH ON ALL OF THE AUTHORS. (Exams which dwell on the same issues from the same authors will not receive as many points as exams which give a variety of answers).

**Part I: Identifications (30 possible points, 7 points each, 2 point bonus for discussing all the texts).** Choose four (4) of the eight (8) passages below and identify (a) from what text it comes and the author; (b) its context within the work or in what argument it is found; (c) its significance to the work as a whole, that is, what are some of the major themes of the author's work reflected in it. Do not copy the passage.

In this exercise you will be graded primarily on your attention to detail in the passage and your synthesis of that detail with your basic understanding of core concepts as they are found in the passage.

<p>A</p> <p>O unhappy race, true heirs of that madman whose sin and disobedience not only doomed you to gloomy exile from paradise but drove you from that other divine state of simple, tranquil innocence, the golden age, condemning you in its place to this age of iron and instruments of destruction! Now your fickle fancy has become infatuated with this folly that describes as enterprise and valour what is but the cruel ferocity of the brute creation, and boasts of its contempt for life, which should always be held dear if only because he who gives it was so loath to lose his own. ... You allow the enemy to flourish at your gates while you go seek another at the other side of the world, at the price of depopulating and weakening this ancient kingdom and squandering its resources.</p>	<p>B</p> <p>The King of Glory (as people learned) had posted a lookout who was a match for Grendel, a guard against monsters, special protection to the Danish prince. And the Geat placed complete trust in his strength of limb and the Lord's favor. He began to remove his iron breast-mail, took off the helmet and handed his attendant the patterned sword, a smith's masterpiece, ordering him to keep the equipment guarded.</p>
<p>C</p> <p>The time will come, and soon, when other victories shall cast into the shade those you see here recorded. New chapters of history still remain to be written by other foreign people who have yet to reach these shores. So much was clear to our sages and seers when they peered into the future. And the magic science has told them this too, that against the might of these newcomers no human resistance can prevail, for there is nothing man can do against destiny; adding, that such will be the martial qualities of these strangers, in war and in peace, that to the ends of the earth it will be accounted glory to the vanquished to have such victors.</p>	<p>D</p> <p>The sword cries out, yet breaks not in the least, Back from the blow into the air it leaps. Destroy he can not; which when he sees, Within himself he makes a plaint most sweet: "Ah! Durendal, most holy, fair indeed! Relics enough thy golden hilt conceals: Saint Peter's Tooth, the Blood of Saint Basile, Some of the Hairs of my Lord, Saint Denise, Some of the Robe, was worn by Saint Mary. It is not right that pagans should thee seize, For Christian men thy use shall ever be. Nor any man's that worketh cowardice! Many broad lands with thee have I retrieved Which Charles holds, who hath the great white beard."</p>

<p>E</p> <p>They are fatherless creatures, and their whole ancestry is hidden in a past of demons and ghosts. They dwell apart among wolves on the hills, on windswept crags and treacherous keshes, where cold streams pour down the mountain and disappear under mist and moorland.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A few miles from here a frost-stiffened wood waits and keep watch above a mere; the overhanging bank is a maze of tree-roots mirrored in its surface. At night there, something uncanny happens: the water burns. And the mere bottom has never been sounded by the sons of men.</p>	<p>F</p> <p>“ The sun behind us blazing red with light outlined my human form upon the ground before me, as my body blocked its rays. I quickly turned around, seized by the fear that I had been abandoned, for I saw the ground was dark only in front of me; and then my Comfort turned to me and said: ‘Why are you so uneasy—do you think that I am not here with you, guiding you?’”</p>
<p>G</p> <p>“ This wretched measure is kept by the miserable souls who lived without infamy and without praise. They are mixed with that cowardly chorus of angels who were not rebels yet were not faithful to God, but were for themselves. The heavens reject them so as not to be less beautiful, nor does deep Hell receive them, for the wicked would have some glory from them.’</p> <p>And I: ‘Master, what is so grievous that it makes them lament so loudly?’ He replied: ... ‘They have no hope of death, and their blind life is so base that they are envious of every other fate.’”</p>	<p>H</p> <p>The count Rollanz, beneath a pine he sits; Turning his eyes towards Spain, he begins Remembering so many diverse things: So many lands where he went conquering, And France the Douce, the heroes of his kin, And Charlemagne, his lord who nourished him.... His right-hand glove, to God he offers it; Saint Gabriel from his hand has taken it. Over his arm his head bows down and slips, He joins his hands: and so is life finished.</p>

**Part II: Essay (70 possible points).** Choose one of the two essay topics listed below.

In writing your response, be sure to give specific examples where you can, drawing on the passages we read in the course. Be sure to give yourself enough time to answer this question thoroughly.

You will be graded not only on the thoroughness of your answer, but also on your synthesis of the various authors' thought, the originality of your argument and the reformulation of the ideas you have been exposed to. Essays which simply have one paragraph for each author and lack synthesis will not receive as many points as more synthetic ones.

1. How does the relation between monotheism and pagan religions serve as a provocative element in the epics we have read? How does epic produced in a monotheistic culture interpret the *heroism* of pagans in particular?
2. Compare the important presence of women in some of the epics we have read to the significant absence of women in others. What are women doing when they are present, and how is the world of men affected by their absence?