



CVSP 208E
EPIC: TEXTS AND CONTEXTS II
FINAL EXAM (2 HOURS)
DRS MALLETTE AND WRISLEY
2 JUNE 2004

This 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. You will have two hours to complete the exam.

Part I: Textual analysis (40 possible points). Choose one of the two questions below. Both of these questions will appear on the exam. You will choose one of the two, and write an essay in response.

Please compare and contrast the two quotations.

- What is the point the author is making in this passage? What are the differences and similarities between these two authors' discussion of parallel topics?
- What are some of the specific, relevant details in the text that illustrate the authors' point?
- How do these passages illustrate general themes in the authors' texts?
- What kinds of significant conclusions can you form by comparing the texts?
- What can you say about the texts that we did not say in class?

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.

TOPIC 1: The translator as hero in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Balthasar's Odyssey*

Aureliano had never been more lucid in any act of his life as when he forgot about his dead ones and the pain of his dead ones and nailed up the doors and windows again with Fernanda's crossed boards so as not to be disturbed by any temptations of the world, for he knew then that his fate was written in Melquíades' parchments. He found them intact among the prehistoric plants and steaming puddles and luminous insects that had removed all trace of man's passage on earth from the room, and he did not have the calmness to bring them out into the light, but right there, standing, without the slightest difficulty, as if they had been written in Spanish and were being read under the dazzling splendor of high noon, he began to decipher them aloud. It was the history of the family, written by Melquíades, down to the most trivial details, one hundred years ahead of time.

One Hundred Years of Solitude, 420-1

Once sitting down at my desk, I opened *The Hundredth Name* in the middle and placed it face down in front of me. Then I picked up this notebook and leafed through it till I found the entry for 20 May – my account of what my Persian friend told me about the debate on the hidden name of God and about Mazandarani's views on the subject. Using this journal entry as a basis for the content, I wrote out what I shall put forward tomorrow as a translation of Mazandarani's own text. For the style, I used my recollections of what little I'd been able to read from the beginning of the cursed tome.

Why do I call it "cursed"? Is it really accursed? Or is it blessed? Or bewitched? I still don't know. All I do know is that it's protected. Protected from me, anyhow....

Sooner or later I'm going to have to get through the book itself and quote the name they're all waiting for, whether it's really the Creator's secret name or only what Mazandarani supposes that to be.

Balthasar's Odyssey, 325

TOPIC 2: The hero as outsider in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *On the Road*

The startling thing about her simplifying instinct was that the more she did away with fashion in search of a comfort and the more she passed over conventions as she obeyed spontaneity, the more disturbing her incredible beauty became and the more provocative she became to men ... Everytime she appeared in the dining room, against Ursula's orders, she cause a panic of exasperation among the outsiders. It was all too evident that she was completely naked underneath her crude nightshirt and no one could understand that her shaved and perfect skull was not some kind of a challenge ... Men expert in the disturbances of love, experienced all over the world, stated that they never suffered an anxiety similar to the one produced by the natural smell of Remedios the Beauty.

One Hundred Years of Solitude, 236-237

[T]hey all sat around looking at Dean with lowered and hating eyes, and he stood on the carpet in the middle of them and giggled – he just giggled. He made a little dance. His bandage was getting dirtier all the time; it began to flop and unroll. I suddenly realized that Dean, by virtue of his enormous series of sins, was becoming the Idiot, the Imbecile, the Saint of the lot... There were earlier days in Denver when Dean has everybody sit in the dark with the girls and just talked, and talked, and talked, with a voice that was once hypnotic and strange and was said to make the girls come across by sheer force of persuasion and the content of what he said. This was when he was fifteen, sixteen. Now his disciples were married and the wives of his disciples had him on the carpet for the sexuality and the life he had helped bring into being.

On the Road, 176-77

Part II: Essay (60 possible points). There are three essay questions listed below. In the second section, you will have to answer *one* essay question. *Two* of the questions given below will appear on the exam, and you will choose one of them to answer.

In writing your response be sure to give specific examples where you can, drawn from 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 epic written by authors from developing nations, or from minority cultures within first world nations, differ from traditional, classic epics? *Is magic realism really epic?*
- 2 How do the tensions between various peoples contribute to the character of epic in the modern world? Take, for example, the Italians and the foreigners (*Jacopo Ortis*), blacks and whites (*Beloved*), European Americans, Native Americans and Mexicans (*Stagecoach*). You may write about any of the texts.