ENG2001: Intro to Fiction, Prof. Scanlan
Gothic Short Stories Essay Details
Fall 2021

Primary Goal: This 900-word essay asks students to compare between two and four characters. Students should compare characters from two stories that we have read so far. Select from the following list:

"The Lottery" -Jackson	"An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" –Bierce
"The Black Cat" -Poe	"A Rose for Emily" -Faulkner
"Young Goodman Brown" -Hawthorne	"Prologue to Invisible Man" -Ellison
"The Yellow Wallpaper" -Gilman	"A Hunger Artist" -Kafka
"A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" -Marquez	

By this point, there is no question that these texts are gothic, so let's focus on what the characters teach us about gothic limits, violence, death, and a return to normalcy. Do some characters reveal what we should do and some reveal what we should not do? More specifically, this essay asks students to compare and contrast between two and four characters in order to address some (not all) of these key ideas:

♦ Allan Lloyd-Smith encourages readers to ask about the Puritan inheritance, fear of democracy, and fear of overturning race, gender, and sexuality codes. How do characters react when faced with these issues?

♦ Lloyd-Smith ultimately believes that the Gothic "explores chaos and wrongdoing in a movement toward the ultimate restitution of order and convention"—the Central Gothic Irony (5). Do the characters you write about desire normalcy or fight against it?

♦ Do events or scenes in the story fall under the definition of Todorov's three terms: uncanny, fantastic, or marvelous? Do the characters seem to follow the Spirit of Perverseness?

♦ How does the stories narration style alter reader sympathy or understanding? What does the focal distance or internal/external narration do to readers' understanding?

♦ Do the actions/emotions of the character lead readers to consider redemption or how they provide an allegory for our present world?

Essay Details:
1. Make sure to begin with a strong thesis that you support by using evidence from the text. Also, use direct quotations from the original text.
2. Write using clear paragraphs that contain declarative topic sentences.
3. Minimum 900 words.
4. You should **not** use outside sources—use notes from our class and handouts such as my handout on gothic definitions--plus the handouts on Todorov and Lloyd-Smith's chapter. [I will not accept papers that use outside sources]
5. If you have questions about Modern Language Association (MLA) format, writing a thesis, paragraph structure, conclusions, or citations, please study the Purdue OWL website that is on our OpenLab course page. If you still have questions after trying to answer questions on your own, then ask me.
6. Above all: choose characters and stories that interest you.

Grading Rubric:
   1. First Page: A clear introduction, title, thesis, and method (25 points)
   2. Formal Writing: Concrete nouns, well-structured sentences, and clear paragraphs (25 points)
   3. Story knowledge: Accurate character, plot, narrator, and setting knowledge; correct weaving of at least four quotations from the stories/articles (25 points)
   4. Gothic terms: Accurate understanding and usage of specific gothic terms such as the gothic definition, hallmarks of the gothic, central gothic irony, betrayal of innocence, and Todorov's uncanny, fantastic, and marvelous (there are others) (25 points)

Important Dates:
          * Two-page draft due: October 20 (posted to OpenLab)
          * Final Draft due: October 27 (posted to BlackBoard)
                  -Late essays will be penalized ten points for each day late.