Gothic Literature, Prof. Sean Scanlan

Final Essay Assignment

Spring 2017

DIRECTIONS: Write a three-page essay (minimum 800 words) in which you examine the novel *The Woman in Black* (1983) by Susan Hill in terms of at least one of the major concepts that we have explored during the last several weeks such as: architecture/space, uncanny, gender, or queer theory. Of course, you may also make use of other terms as they may be of use to you such as: propriety and the Spirit of Perverseness.

These three options may help you decide how to approach your own essay:

A. Chose one or two scenes in which central actions occur and examine the way that space and architecture inform the plot or character emotions/decisions. A variation on this option would be to use Anthony Vidler’s idea of the “architectural uncanny,” a concept that may help readers make more sense of certain scenes and the novel as a whole.

B. Explore the psychology of certain characters and how the uncanny can help us to better understand the novel. In this option, students should make note of which type of uncanny theory they will use. It may be helpful to utilize other terms such as the fantastic or ironic in order to differentiate the various emotions and feelings at work in the novel.

C. This last option makes use of the ideas of identity construction and especially gender norms, imbalances, and queer theory. Explore characters and actions with respect to one of more of these ideas in order to comment on the Victorian attitudes in the novel. Which characters uphold Victorian norms? Which characters fight against them, and what happens to those who follow and those who fight?

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Essay Details:

1. Begin with a strong thesis that you support by using evidence from the text. Also, use direct quotations that you properly cite from the original text.

2. Write using clear paragraphs that contain declarative topic sentences.

3. End with a conclusion that does more than just repeat or summarize your own thesis.

4. Three full pages; use proper, one-inch margins, MLA formatting, standard 12 point font, black ink, no cover page.

5. If you have questions about 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. If you have an alternate idea for an essay, just ask me. Chances are that I will approve it.

7. You may use evidence from the film version, but I want the majority of your essay to be about the novel.

8. You may make use of our class notes, my lectures, and class handouts, but do not use any outside sources or material. This essay asks you to display what our class has covered.

Important Dates:

\* Due date for Draft: May 16

\* Due date for Final Draft: May 18

\* Review for Final Exam: May 23

\* Final Exam: May 25