

所別：英美語文學系碩士班 不分組科目：英美文學與理論

Directions: Choose only ONE of the questions below, and answer it in essay form. Each question asks you to summarize first, and then construct your own argument. In your summary, use your own words; aside from two- or three-word phrases, do not use quotations or near-quotations from the passage. (If you do not use your own words, you will not receive points for this part of your answer.) In your argument, begin with a thesis statement, and support it with a detailed and in-depth analysis. **100 points.**

1. After reading the passage below, summarize, **in your own words**, the narrator's answer to Jacques's question. Then apply one of the three categories (madmen who remember, madmen who forget, and heroes) to each of the three characters that appear or are discussed in the passage. (You don't have to use all the categories, and it is acceptable to use the same category for more than one character.) Provide a close reading to demonstrate how each character, in your opinion, is presented as belonging to the category you have chosen. In your close reading, consider the use of descriptive language and irony in the narrative and dialogue.

I saw Jacques, as a matter of fact, just after Giovanni was sentenced. He was sitting bundled up in his greatcoat on the terrace of a cafe, drinking a *vin chaud*. He was alone on the terrace. He called me as I passed.

He did not look well, his face was mottled, his eyes, behind his glasses, were like the eyes of a dying man who looks everywhere for healing.

'You've heard,' he whispered, as I joined him, 'about Giovanni?'

I nodded yes. I remember the winter sun was shining and I felt as cold and distant as the sun.

'It's terrible, terrible, terrible,' Jacques moaned. 'Terrible.'

'Yes,' I said. I could not say anything more.

'I wonder why he did it,' Jacques pursued, 'why he didn't ask his friends to help him.'

He looked at me. We both knew that the last time Giovanni had asked Jacques for money, Jacques had refused. I said nothing. 'They say he had started taking opium,' Jacques said, 'that he needed the money for opium. Did you hear that?'

I had heard it. It was a newspaper specula-

tion which, however, I had reasons of my own for believing, remembering the extent of Giovanni's desperation, knowing how far this terror, which was so vast that it had simply become a void, had driven him. 'Me, I want to escape,' he had told me, '*je veux m'evader*—this dirty world, this dirty body. I never wish to make love again with anything more than the body.'

Jacques waited for me to answer. I stared out into the street. I was beginning to think of Giovanni dying—where Giovanni had been there would be nothing, nothing forever.

'I hope it's not my fault,' Jacques said at last. 'I didn't give him the money. If I'd known—I would have given him everything I had.'

But we both knew this was not true.

'You two together,' Jacques suggested, 'you weren't happy together?'

'No,' I said. I stood up. 'It might have been better,' I said, 'if he'd stayed down there in that village of his in Italy and planted his olive trees and had a lot of children and beaten his wife. He used to love to sing,' I remembered suddenly, 'maybe he could have stayed down there and sung his life away and died in bed.'

Then Jacques said something that surprised me. People are full of surprises, even for themselves, if they have been stirred enough. 'Nobody can stay in the garden of Eden,' Jacques said. And then: 'I wonder why.'

I said nothing. I said goodbye and left him.

Hella had long since returned from Spain and we were already arranging to rent this house and I had a date to meet her.

I have thought about Jacques' question since. The question is banal but one of the real troubles with living is that living is so banal. Everyone, after all, goes the same dark road—and the road has a trick of being most dark, most treacherous, when it seems most bright—and it's true that nobody stays in the garden of Eden. Jacques' garden was not the same as Giovanni's, of course. Jacques' garden was involved with football players and Giovanni's was involved with maidens—but that seems to have made so little difference. Perhaps everybody has a garden of Eden, I don't know; but they have scarcely seen their garden before they see the flaming sword. Then, perhaps, life only offers the choice of remembering the garden or forgetting it. Either, or: it takes strength to remember, it takes another kind of strength to forget, it takes a hero to do both. People who remember court madness through pain, the pain of the perpetually recurring death of their innocence; people who forget court another kind of madness, the madness of the denial of pain and the hatred of innocence; and the world is mostly divided between madmen who remember and madmen who forget. Heroes are rare.

2. Read the passage below, paying attention to how the author constructs an argument about the relationship of language to "thought" (the conceptual categories through which subjects perceive and understand the world they live in). First restate this argument **using your own words**. At the end of your summary, explain how the author relates this argument to literature. Second, provide your own example of a cultural text (a novel, film, TV miniseries, comic book series, etc.) or a cultural practice (KTV singing, video gaming, e-text fan fiction writing, etc.) that challenges some of the commonly accepted thought-categories of its time and social context. Provide a detailed and in depth analysis of the text or practice that specifies *what* categories are challenged, *how* it challenges them, and *why* this is significant, given the historical and social context.

參考用

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How language relates to thought has been a major issue for recent theory. At one extreme is the common-sense view that language just provides names for thoughts that exist independently; language offers ways of expressing pre-existing thoughts. At the other extreme is the 'Sapir-Whorf hypothesis', named after two linguists who claimed that the language we speak determines what we can think. For instance, Whorf argued that the Hopi Indians have a conception of time that can't be grasped in English (and so can't be explained here!). There seems no way of demonstrating that there are thoughts of one language that can't be thought or expressed in another, but we do have massive evidence that one language makes 'natural' or 'normal' thoughts that require a special effort in another.

The linguistic code is a theory of the world. Different languages divide up the world differently. Speakers of English have 'pets'—a category to which nothing in French corresponds, though the French possess inordinate numbers of dogs and cats. English compels us to learn the sex of an infant so as to use the correct pronoun to talk about him or her (you can't call a baby 'it'); our language thus implies that the sex is crucial (whence, no doubt, the popularity of pink or blue garments, to signal the right answer to speakers). But

this linguistic marking of sex is in no way inevitable; all languages don't make sex the crucial feature of newborns. Grammatical structures, too, are conventions of a language, not natural or inevitable. When we look up in the sky and see a movement of wings, our language could perfectly well have us say something like 'It's winging' (as we say, 'It's raining'), rather than 'Birds are flying.' A famous poem by Paul Verlaine plays on this structure: 'Il pleure dans mon cœur / Comme il pleut sur la ville' (It cries in my heart, as it rains on the town). We say 'it's raining in town'; why not 'it's crying in my heart'?

Language is not a 'nomenclature' that provides labels for pre-existing categories; it generates its own categories. But speakers and readers can be brought to see through and around the settings of their language, so as to see a different reality. Works of literature explore the settings or categories of habitual ways of thinking and frequently attempt to bend or reshape them, showing us how to think something that our language had not previously anticipated, forcing us to attend to the categories through which we unthinkingly view the world. Language is thus both the concrete manifestation of ideology—the categories in which speakers are authorized to think—and the site of its questioning or undoing.

3. The passage below is a genre analysis of the famous Japanese animated film *Akira*. First summarize in your own words Hurley's definition of the subgenre "Body Horror," explaining how it is distinguished from the general category of horror. Then summarize how Napier (the author of the passage) demonstrates that *Akira* belongs to the subgenre "Body Horror," and how she uses this subgenre analysis to draw out some of the deeper implications of the film. Then, provide your own example of a film that you think belongs to this subgenre. As Napier has done, construct a close reading of a scene or two from the film to support your claim. As you do so, try to use this model of analysis to explore how the film constructs unusual images and meanings for bodies.

The film fits into a comparatively recently identified subset of the horror genre, a subgenre that has been identified as "Body Horror." As Kelly Hurley defines it:

"Body Horror" [is] a hybrid genre that recombines the narrative and cinematic conventions of the science fiction, horror, and suspense film in order to stage a spectacle of the human body defamiliarized, rendered other. Body horror seeks to inspire revulsion—and in its own way pleasure—through representations of quasi-human figures whose effect/affect is produced by their abjection, their ambiguity, their impossible embodiment of multiple, incompatible forms.⁸

Akira works remarkably well in this subgenre, for the film's last fifteen minutes or so contain an extraordinary vision of almost unwatchable excess as Tetsuo's mutations become increasingly grotesque. Although hideous, these metamorphoses are also truly spectacular (in the post-modern sense of spectacle) leaving the viewer shaken by feelings of both horror and exhilaration. On a more traditional level, they can be seen as memorably emblemizing the crisis of the alienated adolescent, isolated, vengeful, frightened, and, at a deep level, monstrous both to himself and others.

The film's primary subtext is the tension between the two related but contradictory concepts of power and control (the English word "control"—or "kontororu," as it is pronounced in Japanese—is used frequently throughout the film), concepts that have deep resonance for the adolescent developing from child to adult. At the beginning of the film the oppressive male adult authority structure of government, military, and the scientific establishment (not so different than contemporary Japan, although more extreme) wield all control. However,

by *Akira's* end, we see the total diminishment of authority as, one by one, the representatives of the establishment admit that they can no longer control what is happening around them; this is seen especially in the body of Tetsuo, who they had hoped to use as an experimental guinea pig. While the power of authority diminishes, the young man's power grows, but even he is unable to control it in the end. Total bodily transmutation into a form of Otherness hinted at in the film's ending is the final price Tetsuo has to pay. Before this occurs however, the viewer is treated to (or subjected to) an awesome spectacle of corporeal mutation that conforms well to Hurley's general description of what happens to the human subject in body horror: "The narrative told by body horror again and again is of a human subject dismantled and demolished; a human body whose integrity is violated, a human identity whose boundaries are breached from all sides."⁹

Tetsuo's metamorphosis is both a literal and a symbolic one: from ordinary human boy to monstrous creature to, perhaps, a new universe; in other words, from impotence to total power. Tetsuo's new powers may also symbolize his development from adolescent into adult, especially since at the film's end he is identified by language rather than image, thus suggesting his entry into the Symbolic order. However, this form of "adult" identity appears to be totally uncontrollable in its arrogation of power, not to mention wholly lacking in any spiritual or moral development.¹⁰

參考用