

### EN110 FINAL EXAM PART 2: ESSAY (18%)

Choose *one* of the following and write a brief essay. Your essay must be no less than 500 words in length. It must consist only of a simple title, followed by a brief introduction and the body of the essay. *Do not add any filler, such as your name, the date, or anything else.*

1. In a letter to his brother about *Dubliners*, James Joyce once remarked that he was “trying to give people some kind of intellectual pleasure or spiritual enjoyment by converting the bread of everyday life into something that has a permanent artistic life of its own ... for their moral, and spiritual uplift.” Apply this idea to *two* of the readings we’ve studied and compare the ways in which they fulfill Joyce’s description.

2. The meanings of the terms “hero,” “heroism,” and “heroic” differ across historical periods and cultural perspectives. Broadly defined, heroism is the demonstrated capacity for admirable behavior or achievement. This heroic behavior could, but need not, be of the traditional kind (whatever *that* is). Using your creative imagination, choose any *two* of the following characters (or others not listed) and compare their heroic qualities. The idea here is to establish connections between two otherwise different heroes.

Cordelia (*Lear*)

Gloucester (*Lear*)

Angellica Bianca (*The Rover*)

Brenda (“Five Points”)

Almeda (“Meneseteung”)

Pardoner

Wife of Bath

Florinda (*The Rover*)

Hellena (*The Rover*)

3. Choose *one* of the following poems and closely examine the ways in which sound, image, rhyme, patterns of repetition, or other formal features complement and intensify the poem’s meaning.

#### MYTH (by Natasha Trethewey)

I was asleep while you were dying.  
It’s as if you slipped through some rift, a hollow  
I make between my slumber and my waking,

the *Erebus*\* I keep you in, still trying  
not to let go. You’ll be dead again tomorrow,  
but in dreams you live. So I try taking

\* *primordial god of darkness*

you back into morning. Sleep-heavy, turning,  
my eyes open, I find you do not follow.  
Again and again, this constant forsaking.

Again and again, this constant forsaking:  
my eyes open, I find you do not follow.  
You back into morning, sleep-heavy, turning.

But in dreams you live. So I try taking,  
not to let go. You’ll be dead again tomorrow.  
The *Erebus* I keep you in—still, trying—

I make between my slumber and my waking.  
It’s as if you slipped through some rift, a hollow.  
I was asleep while you were dying.

#### DIGGING (by Seamus Heaney)

Between my finger and my thumb  
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.

Under my window, a clean rasping sound  
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:  
My father, digging. I look down

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds  
Bends low, comes up twenty years away  
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills  
Where he was digging.

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft  
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.  
He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep  
To scatter new potatoes that we picked,  
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

By God, the old man could handle a spade.  
Just like his old man.

My grandfather cut more turf in a day  
Than any other man on Toner's bog.  
Once I carried him milk in a bottle  
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up  
To drink it, then fell to right away  
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods  
Over his shoulder, going down and down  
For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap  
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge  
Through living roots awaken in my head.  
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb  
The squat pen rests.  
I'll dig with it.