

Module: Study of Literary Texts
Level: Third Year (L 3)
Academic Year: 2023-2024
Student's Full Name:

Date: June 06th, 2024
Locale: Amphi 02 (ST)
Timing: 12.00—13.30
Group:

Model Answer of the Second-Semester Resit Exam

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Your answer should be formulated in your own style. Identical answers will be automatically discredited.
2. Write in clear handwriting and mind your English (Four points are allocated for the mastery of language).
3. Do not use the red pen.

ACTIVITY ONE:

Read the text carefully. Then, answer the questions.

Savage Heroism and Civilized Barbarity

A party of white people from one of the frontier settlements [...], once went out against a body of Indians, who were in arms to oppose a small colony of settlers, who had taken possession of some lands, which the Indians alleged they had never sold. Indians remonstrated with their tomahawks; and therefore now declared war by driving off those whom they adjudged to be encroachers. The whites were not of a temper to be intimidated: they resolved, and were soon prepared, to attack the Indians in their turns; who, being fallen upon when they were off their guard, and finding themselves likely to be overpowered, fairly took to their heels. Among them was a young squaw, with an infant in her arms. She was supposed to belong to a person of some note, from her dress being composed almost entirely of silk handkerchiefs. Checked in her speed by the burthen of her helpless charge, she hoped to escape by hiding herself and her child among the weeds of a marsh. The thought showed she possessed great presence of mind; but, alas! It was of no avail. The chieftain of the whites (whose name I forbear to mention) espied her, and took his aim. This she saw; and being sensible also that she must fall, (for, when riflemen have a fair shot, they are rarely known to miss their object,) her last and only care was, if possible, to preserve her babe. With this hope, she instantly turned it from her back to her breast; that she alone might receive the ball. And even when she fell, by a kind instinct of nature (of the true force of which in such a case mothers only are, perhaps, the proper judges), she was anxious and careful so to fall as that her child might not be hurt. I am shocked to relate that both the mother and her babe were killed and scalped.

(Jonathan Boucher)

Glossary:

party: group alleged: declared remonstrated: protested tomahawk: weapon used by North American Indians adjudged to be encroachers: considered as invaders temper: mood intimidated: threatened resolved: decided took to their heels: ran away squaw: American Indian woman	a person of some note: an important person silk handkerchiefs: a decorated cloth of very high quality burthen: burden weeds of a marsh: grass that grow in wet land chieftain: leader forbear: refuse riflemen: sniper no avail: useless proper judges: right evaluators scalped: their skin of the head removed
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Question 01: Compare between Jonathan Boucher's account of the conflict between the settlers and American Indians in the above text and puritan accounts of similar conflicts? Support your answer with details from the text. (06.00 points)

Model Answer:

In spite of the fact that the conflict between the frontier settlers and American Indians took place in different British colonies in America, the attitude towards such conflicts differed from writer to another in a number of respects. Unlike puritans, who viewed their conflict with Native Americans from a purely religious perspective, Jonathan Boucher did not made any religious comments on them. In fact, he attributed the conflict to a worldly matter, i.e. it was a conflict over the ownership of land. Indeed, there are no traces of religious words, phrases, or Biblical statements in the text (02.00 points). Puritans usually depicted the Indians as merciless and bloody-thirsty aggressors. In contrast, Boucher

portrayed them as helpless victims of the settlers' power and ruthlessness, i.e. pitilessness and heartlessness. For example, he did not report any instance of a massacre of European settlers by the Natives. On the contrary, he mentions the brutal and inhumane massacre of an innocent and helpless Indian woman and her baby who were indiscriminately killed in cold blood and physically mutilated (02.00 points). Most importantly, Boucher makes a significant description of the squaw's appearance: "her dress being composed almost entirely of silk handkerchiefs." He also referred to the way she sacrifices herself so as to protect her baby. In doing so, Boucher stresses upon the squaw's humanity. Puritans, nevertheless, were more likely to dehumanize the Indians and likened them to cruel wild animals (02.00 points). In a nutshell, Boucher views the conflict between the settlers and Native Americans differently from that of the puritans.

Question 02: Explain the significance of title of the text. (04.00 points)

Model Answer:

The title of the text, i.e. *Savage Heroism and Civilized Barbarity*, is very significant. On the one hand, the phrase "Savage heroism" denotes the humane instinctive behaviour of the innocent American Indian woman, in spite of her primitive background, in order to save her baby. Her "heroism" emanates from the purity of her human nature (02.00 points). In a word, the squaw corresponds to the concept of "the noble savage". On the other hand, "Civilized Barbarity" alludes to the rifleman who used an instrument of his European civilization, i.e. the rifle, in a skilled way to commit the barbarous act of killing the innocent squaw and her baby (02.00 points).

ACTIVITY TWO:

Based on lecture notes and class discussions, explain the meaning of the term "American literature" in a well-elaborated paragraph. (06.00 points)

Model Answer:

The term "American literature" denotes the combination of the meanings of the words "American" and "literature". American literature came into existence as a national necessity to counteract the domination of European literature. Literature in America before the eighteenth century was neither American nor literature. Americans, after their independence, began to Americanize their literature and show the exceptionalism of their culture. Hence, they distanced themselves from British and European models and patterns of literature. Instead, they incorporated a number of typically American elements in their literary works such as the Native American as a national figure, American nature as a source of inspiration, slavery as a typical American problem, the frontier as an emblem of freedom, escapism, etc (03.00 points). As for "literature", the latter corresponds to the literary aspects of the writings of Americans. The majority of colonial writings were void of any artistic quality before they were written either for practical pragmatic or didactic reasons. Early Romantic and renaissance writers in America such as Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, and Emily Dickinson did not only write literary works of artistic quality, but they also invented new literary forms such as the short story, free verse, etc (03.00 points). All in all, American literature came into existence as a representation of American identity and aesthetic experience.

N.B.

04.00 points are allocated for the mastery of language (spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, capitalization, tense, etc.)