

Summer 2020 Reading Assignments English (Grade 10)

Instructions for THIS packet (you ALSO have an assignment for *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*):

- Read the following short stories (and their background information):
 - Background Information: Liam O’Flaherty
 - “The Sniper” by Liam O’Flaherty (Ireland)
 - Background Information: Gabriel Garcia Marquez
 - “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” by Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Colombia)
 - Background Information: Albert Camus
 - “The Guest” by Albert Camus (France)
 - Background Information: Jamaica Kincaid
 - “Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua)
 - Historical Context: Colonialism

These four short stories are representative of different cultures in world literature that focus on a variety of themes including the impact of war, accountability, fear, empathy, and intergenerational relationships/conflict.

- On each printed page of each **short story**, highlight at least two (separate) sentences that connect to the big ideas mentioned above, that you find intriguing or thought-provoking, or that lead to a question about the text.
- Then, include an annotation (write in the margin) to remind yourself why you highlighted each of those sentences. These annotations might reference the author’s themes, characters, symbols, foreshadowing, imagery, figurative language, tone, style, irony, and satire.
- You will also have several questions to answer about each story as well as some questions to answer that connect stories together.
- These annotations and responses will be your grade for your summer assignment and help you during class discussions and writing activities.

Please read each story TWO times. One of the readings should be aloud, or you may use the links below to listen to the audio:

- “The Sniper” by Liam O’Flaherty (Ireland)
 - <https://youtu.be/UR3p38PrNrM>
- “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” by Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Colombia)
 - <https://youtu.be/UR3p38PrNrM>
- “The Guest” by Albert Camus (France)
 - <https://youtu.be/UR3p38PrNrM>
- “Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua)
 - <https://youtu.be/AHr1HYW0mKE>

If you are unable to print, please make an appointment to pick up a printed packet.

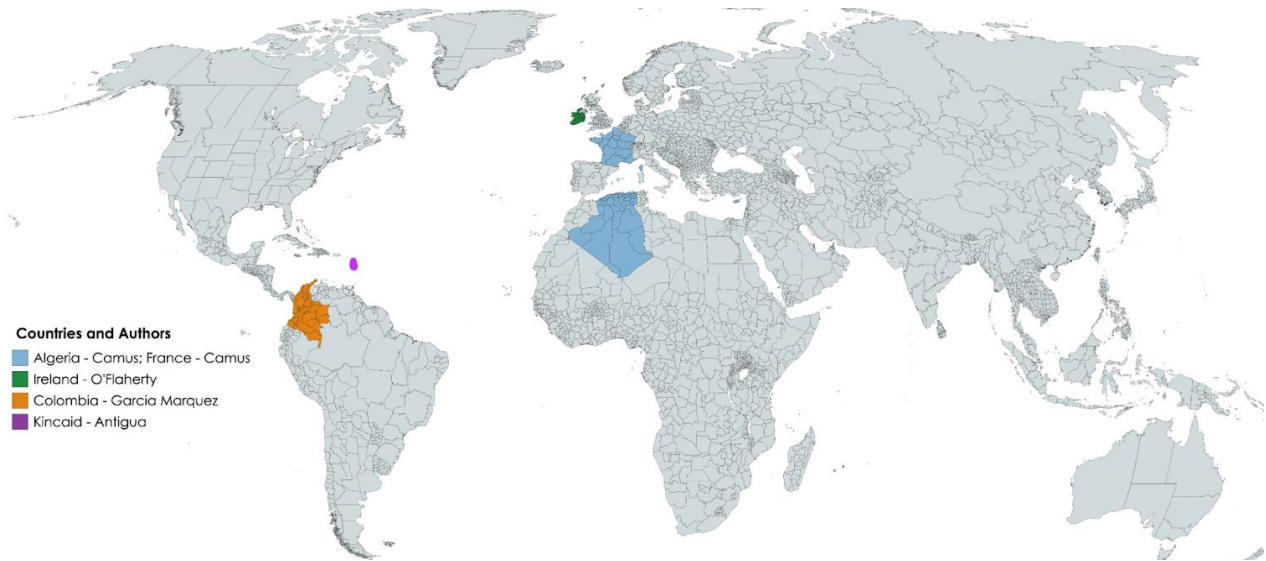
You can call 813-803-7903 or email info@classicalprep.org.

Summer office hours are Monday - Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

SHORT STORIES - AUTHOR MAP

Reference the map below to see where each author is from throughout the world.

The focus in 10th grade English is World Literature, so you will read works from men and women who lived or still live all over the globe.



STORY 1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Liam O'Flaherty

BIOGRAPHY AND BACKGROUND

In 1896, Liam O'Flaherty was born in Inishmore in the Aran Islands, a group of three islands on the west coast of Ireland. His first plans for adulthood were to become a priest. He was educated by the Holy Ghost Fathers for the priesthood, and he studied at a Dublin seminary. While in seminary, he abandoned the idea of becoming a priest. He entered University College Dublin but left to join the Irish Guards. He fought in France in World War I, yet he was shell-shocked and discharged. O'Flaherty travelled abroad for three years. He worked as a miner, lumberjack, hotel porter, and bank clerk in the United States and in Canada. When he returned to Ireland, he became deeply involved in politics. He gained attention in 1922 when he led a group of unemployed workers to seize the Rotunda Concert Hall, a public building in Dublin, and founded the Irish Communist Party. He was driven out of Ireland and settled in England, where he wrote his first novel. He returned to Dublin in the mid-1920s.

O'Flaherty wrote short stories and novels about the Irish people's struggle for freedom. He is thought of as a novelist of the Irish revolution, and he is a key writer in the Irish Renaissance literary movement. His works are about the hard, physical lives of the peasant and common person and the struggles for political independence and economic self-sufficiency. He achieved his greatest fame with "The Informer" (1926), the story of a man who, for money and out of confusion over ideals, betrays his friends in the Irish fight for independence from Britain in the 1920s. In 1935 it was made into an even more popular movie, now regarded as a film classic. In John Zneimer's work "The Literary Vision of Liam O'Flaherty," the writer points out O'Flaherty's themes were of "traditions that have failed in a world that is falling apart, about desperate men seeking meaning through violent acts." Some of his books were banned by the Irish Censorship Board, and he was largely ignored in his homeland. Although now his works are included in Irish school literature courses.

"The Sniper" is O'Flaherty's first published short story. The setting, the Irish Civil War of the early 1920s, was all too familiar to the writer. The Irish and British reading audience in the 1920s was well versed in the ongoing troubles that surrounded Ireland and its relationship to the United Kingdom. In "The Sniper," two snipers on opposing sides of the conflict face off in a duel. A background about Ireland's conflict in the 1920s assists modern readers. In the spring of 1922, fighting broke out in Ireland over the Anglo-Irish Treaty. This treaty would make southern Ireland an independent state within the British Commonwealth and leave six counties in Northern Ireland part of Great Britain. Free Staters in Ireland supported the treaty. Republicans

in Ireland opposed it. They took up arms and fought for control of Ireland's government and national spirit. "The Sniper" first appeared in a London magazine in January 1923. At the time of the short story's writing and publication, the civil war was still going on. A cease-fire between the two Irish armies was called in the spring, just a few months after the publication. This detail of timing may cause readers to more closely examine O'Flaherty's story for a political message about the civil war.

O'Flaherty was seen as handsome with steely blue eyes, that one of his contemporaries said reflected "the ocean that encircled his boyhood." He was married to writer Margaret Barrington from 1926-32 and had two daughters, Pegeen O'Flaherty Sullivan and Joyce O'Flaherty Rathbone. O'Flaherty died in Dublin, Ireland in 1984 at the age of eighty-eight.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The following article from *History.com Editors* explains the background of the 1920s Irish Civil War:

Irish Free State Declared: December 6, 1921

The Irish Free State, comprising four-fifths of Ireland, is declared, ending a five-year Irish struggle for independence from Britain. Like other self-governing nations of the former British Empire, Ireland was to remain part of the British Commonwealth, symbolically subject to the king. The Irish Free State later severed ties with Britain and was renamed Eire, and is now called the Republic of Ireland.

English rule over the island of Ireland dates back to the 12th century, and Queen Elizabeth I of England encouraged the large-scale immigration of Scottish Protestants in the 16th century. During ensuing centuries, a series of rebellions by Irish Catholics were put down as the Anglo-Irish minority extended their domination over the Catholic majority. Under absentee landlords, the Irish population was reduced to a subsistence diet based on potatoes, and when the Potato Famine struck the country in the 1840s, one million people starved to death while nearly two million more fled to the United States.

A movement for Irish home rule gained momentum in the late 19th century, and in 1916 Irish nationalists launched the Easter Rising against British rule in Dublin. The rebellion was crushed, but widespread agitation for independence continued. In 1919, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) launched a widespread and effective guerrilla campaign against British forces. In 1921, a cease-fire was declared, and in January 1922 a faction of Irish nationalists signed a peace treaty with Britain, calling for the partition of Ireland, with the south becoming autonomous and the six northern counties of the island remaining in the United Kingdom.

Civil war broke out even before the declaration of the Irish Free State on December 6, 1922, and ended with the victory of the Irish Free State over the Irish Republican forces in 1923. A constitution adopted by the Irish people in 1937 declared Ireland to be “a sovereign, independent, democratic state,” and the Irish Free State was renamed Eire. Eire remained neutral during World War II, and in 1949 the Republic of Ireland Act severed the last remaining link with the Commonwealth.

Conflicts persisted over Northern Ireland, however, and the IRA, outlawed in the south, went underground to try to regain the northern counties still ruled by Britain. Violence between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland escalated in the early 1970s, and to date the fighting has claimed more than 3,000 lives.

STORY 1

"The Sniper" by Liam O'Flaherty

The long June twilight faded into night. Dublin lay enveloped in darkness but for the dim light of the moon that shone through fleecy clouds, casting a pale light as of approaching dawn over the streets and the dark waters of the Liffey. Around the beleaguered Four Courts the heavy guns roared. Here and there through the city, machine guns and rifles broke the silence of the night, spasmodically, like dogs barking on lone farms. Republicans and Free Staters were waging civil war.

On a rooftop near O'Connell Bridge, a Republican sniper lay watching. Beside him lay his rifle and over his shoulders was slung a pair of field glasses. His face was the face of a student, thin and ascetic, but his eyes had the cold gleam of the fanatic. They were deep and thoughtful, the eyes of a man who is used to looking at death.

He was eating a sandwich hungrily. He had eaten nothing since morning. He had been too excited to eat. He finished the sandwich, and, taking a flask of whiskey from his pocket, he took a short drought. Then he returned the flask to his pocket. He paused for a moment, considering whether he should risk a smoke. It was dangerous. The flash might be seen in the darkness, and there were enemies watching. He decided to take the risk.

Placing a cigarette between his lips, he struck a match, inhaled the smoke hurriedly and put out the light. Almost immediately, a bullet flattened itself against the parapet of the roof. The sniper took another whiff and put out the cigarette. Then he swore softly and crawled away to the left.

Cautiously he raised himself and peered over the parapet. There was a flash and a bullet whizzed over his head. He dropped immediately. He had seen the flash. It came from the opposite side of the street.

He rolled over the roof to a chimney stack in the rear, and slowly drew himself up behind it, until his eyes were level with the top of the parapet. There was nothing to be seen--just the dim outline of the opposite housetop against the blue sky. His enemy was under cover.

Just then an armored car came across the bridge and advanced slowly up the street. It stopped on the opposite side of the street, fifty yards ahead. The sniper could hear the dull panting of the

motor. His heart beat faster. It was an enemy car. He wanted to fire, but he knew it was useless. His bullets would never pierce the steel that covered the gray monster.

Then round the corner of a side street came an old woman, her head covered by a tattered shawl. She began to talk to the man in the turret of the car. She was pointing to the roof where the sniper lay. An informer.

The turret opened. A man's head and shoulders appeared, looking toward the sniper. The sniper raised his rifle and fired. The head fell heavily on the turret wall. The woman darted toward the side street. The sniper fired again. The woman whirled round and fell with a shriek into the gutter.

Suddenly from the opposite roof a shot rang out and the sniper dropped his rifle with a curse. The rifle clattered to the roof. The sniper thought the noise would wake the dead. He stooped to pick the rifle up. He couldn't lift it. His forearm was dead. "I'm hit," he muttered.

Dropping flat onto the roof, he crawled back to the parapet. With his left hand he felt the injured right forearm. The blood was oozing through the sleeve of his coat. There was no pain--just a deadened sensation, as if the arm had been cut off.

Quickly he drew his knife from his pocket, opened it on the breastwork of the parapet, and ripped open the sleeve. There was a small hole where the bullet had entered. On the other side there was no hole. The bullet had lodged in the bone. It must have fractured it. He bent the arm below the wound. the arm bent back easily. He ground his teeth to overcome the pain.

Then taking out his field dressing, he ripped open the packet with his knife. He broke the neck of the iodine bottle and let the bitter fluid drip into the wound. A paroxysm of pain swept through him. He placed the cotton wadding over the wound and wrapped the dressing over it. He tied the ends with his teeth.

Then he lay still against the parapet, and, closing his eyes, he made an effort of will to overcome the pain.

In the street beneath all was still. The armored car had retired speedily over the bridge, with the machine gunner's head hanging lifeless over the turret. The woman's corpse lay still in the gutter.

The sniper lay still for a long time nursing his wounded arm and planning escape. Morning must not find him wounded on the roof. The enemy on the opposite roof covered his escape. He must

kill that enemy and he could not use his rifle. He had only a revolver to do it. Then he thought of a plan.

Taking off his cap, he placed it over the muzzle of his rifle. Then he pushed the rifle slowly upward over the parapet, until the cap was visible from the opposite side of the street. Almost immediately there was a report, and a bullet pierced the center of the cap. The sniper slanted the rifle forward. The cap clipped down into the street. Then catching the rifle in the middle, the sniper dropped his left hand over the roof and let it hang, lifelessly. After a few moments he let the rifle drop to the street. Then he sank to the roof, dragging his hand with him.

Crawling quickly to his feet, he peered up at the corner of the roof. His ruse had succeeded. The other sniper, seeing the cap and rifle fall, thought that he had killed his man. He was now standing before a row of chimney pots, looking across, with his head clearly silhouetted against the western sky.

The Republican sniper smiled and lifted his revolver above the edge of the parapet. The distance was about fifty yards--a hard shot in the dim light, and his right arm was paining him like a thousand devils. He took a steady aim. His hand trembled with eagerness. Pressing his lips together, he took a deep breath through his nostrils and fired. He was almost deafened with the report and his arm shook with the recoil.

Then when the smoke cleared, he peered across and uttered a cry of joy. His enemy had been hit. He was reeling over the parapet in his death agony. He struggled to keep his feet, but he was slowly falling forward as if in a dream. The rifle fell from his grasp, hit the parapet, fell over, bounded off the pole of a barber's shop beneath and then clattered on the pavement. Then the dying man on the roof crumpled up and fell forward. The body turned over and over in space and hit the ground with a dull thud. Then it lay still.

The sniper looked at his enemy falling and he shuddered. The lust of battle died in him. He became bitten by remorse. The sweat stood out in beads on his forehead. Weakened by his wound and the long summer day of fasting and watching on the roof, he revolted from the sight of the shattered mass of his dead enemy. His teeth chattered, he began to gibber to himself, cursing the war, cursing himself, cursing everybody.

He looked at the smoking revolver in his hand, and with an oath he hurled it to the roof at his feet. The revolver went off with a concussion and the bullet whizzed past the sniper's head. He was frightened back to his senses by the shock. His nerves steadied. The cloud of fear scattered from his mind and he laughed.

Taking the whiskey flask from his pocket, he emptied it a drought. He felt reckless under the influence of the spirit. He decided to leave the roof now and look for his company commander, to report.

Everywhere around was quiet. There was not much danger in going through the streets. He picked up his revolver and put it in his pocket. Then he crawled down through the skylight to the house underneath.

When the sniper reached the laneway on the street level, he felt a sudden curiosity as to the identity of the enemy sniper whom he had killed. He decided that he was a good shot, whoever he was. He wondered did he know him. Perhaps he had been in his own company before the split in the army. He decided to risk going over to have a look at him. He peered around the corner into O'Connell Street. In the upper part of the street there was heavy firing, but around here all was quiet.

The sniper darted across the street. A machine gun tore up the ground around him with a hail of bullets, but he escaped. He threw himself face downward beside the corpse. The machine gun stopped.

Then the sniper turned over the dead body and looked into his brother's face.

STORY 1

"The Sniper" by Liam O'Flaherty

STORY 1 RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Your responses to the following questions should be at least one solid paragraph (topic sentence, at least six sentences that include details from the story and explanations/elaboration, concluding sentence).

1. O'Flaherty presents the sniper's situation in a straightforward way. He doesn't persuade the reader to side with the sniper or view him as evil. He allows the reader to respond in his or her own way. One of the ways O'Flaherty does this is through concrete details. He appeals to the reader's senses with imagery. Describe **two** different excerpts of the story that appeal to any of the five senses: visual/seeing, olfactory/smelling, tactile/touching, auditory/hearing, and gustatory/tasting.
2. At what point in the story does the reader witness the sniper's thoughts and feelings about the war? How is this different from us experiencing the sniper's viewpoint from the beginning? Why do you think O'Flaherty shows these thoughts before the sniper's discovery at the very end of the story?

STORY 2

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Gabriel García Márquez

BIOGRAPHY AND BACKGROUND

Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez was considered one of the greatest twentieth-century Spanish-language authors, best known for his masterpiece of magical realism, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The 1967 novel sold more than 30 million copies, and he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982.

He achieved fame for pioneering magical realism, a unique blending of the marvellous and the mundane in a way that made the extraordinary seem routine. “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings: A Tale for Children” exemplifies magical realism in its almost casual treatment of what we might call in another context otherworldly, strange, or miraculous.

LITERARY CONTEXT

Although García Márquez is most famous for his 1967 novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, his novellas and short stories have attracted considerable admiration too. In “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings,” not only do we find a beautiful example of the writer’s interest in magical realism, we also observe thematic concerns that recur in most of his major works: rural village life, greed and hunger for power, as well as myth, superstition, and religion.

Focusing less on overarching themes, literary critic Clementina Adams draws our attention to the importance of geography and climate. Adams writes,

Aracataca, García Márquez's birthplace, is located on the northern coast of Colombia. This town and many other towns in the State of Magdalena and on the Atlantic coast, such as Barranquilla, appear in the writer's fiction. Their location close to the sea and to the equator has made their atmospheric conditions unique in relation to other coastal towns. In that area, there are only two main seasons: the dry season, from November to April; and the rainy season, from April to November...During the rainy season, the heat and dampness become unbearable and suffocating. In addition, the rain becomes intolerable and frightening, especially since floods and destruction are frequent in some villages. Catastrophes usually accompany those endless rains. (1998)

To García Márquez, human feelings and a sense of existence are intertwined with perceptions of climatological conditions. In his works, the heat and dampness of hot days are usually associated with feelings of anger, anxiety and skepticism, but they can also represent the drowsiness and stupor of an empty, paralyzed and hopeless life, full of desperation and anxiety which, in spite of it all, is heavy with "existence."

Setting includes more than a story's location. As Adams reminds us, weather has a tremendous effect on atmosphere, on mood, and on tone. After all, in the opening lines of "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings," Pelayo is throwing crabs (brought into his home by floodwaters) back into the sea. As you read, ask yourself whether the heavy rains appear to trigger, as Adams suggests, "the drowsiness and stupor of an empty, paralyzed life" or "feelings of anger, anxiety, and skepticism," or some uncomfortable combination.

STORY 2

"A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings: A Tale for Children"

**by Gabriel García Márquez
(translated by Gregory Rabassa)**

On the third day of rain they had killed so many crabs inside the house that Pelayo had to cross his drenched courtyard and throw them into the sea, because the newborn child had a temperature all night and they thought it was due to the stench. The world had been sad since Tuesday. Sea and sky were a single ash-gray thing and the sands of the beach, which on March nights glimmered like powdered light, had become a stew of mud and rotten shellfish. The light was so weak at noon that when Pelayo was coming back to the house after throwing away the crabs, it was hard for him to see what it was that was moving and groaning in the rear of the courtyard. He had to go very close to see that it was an old man, a very old man, lying face down in the mud, who, in spite of his tremendous efforts, couldn't get up, impeded by his enormous wings.

Frightened by that nightmare, Pelayo ran to get Elisenda, his wife, who was putting compresses on the sick child, and he took her to the rear of the courtyard. They both looked at the fallen body with a mute stupor. He was dressed like a ragpicker. There were only a few faded hairs left on his bald skull and very few teeth in his mouth, and his pitiful condition of a drenched great-grandfather took away any sense of grandeur he might have had. His huge buzzard wings, dirty and half-plucked, were forever entangled in the mud. They looked at him so long and so closely that Pelayo and Elisenda very soon overcame their surprise and in the end found him familiar. Then they dared speak to him, and he answered in an incomprehensible dialect with a strong sailor's voice. That was how they skipped over the inconvenience of the wings and quite intelligently concluded that he was a lonely castaway from some foreign ship wrecked by the storm. And yet, they called in a neighbor woman who knew everything about life and death to see him, and all she needed was one look to show them their mistake.

"He's an angel," she told them. "He must have been coming for the child, but the poor fellow is so old that the rain knocked him down."

On the following day everyone knew that a flesh-and-blood angel was held captive in Pelayo's house. Against the judgment of the wise neighbor woman, for whom angels in those times were the fugitive survivors of a celestial conspiracy, they did not have the heart to club him to death. Pelayo watched over him all afternoon from the kitchen, armed with his bailiff's club, and before

going to bed he dragged him out of the mud and locked him up with the hens in the wire chicken coop. In the middle of the night, when the rain stopped, Pelayo and Elisenda were still killing crabs. A short time afterward the child woke up without a fever and with a desire to eat. Then they felt magnanimous and decided to put the angel on a raft with fresh water and provisions for three days and leave him to his fate on the high seas. But when they went out into the courtyard with the first light of dawn, they found the whole neighborhood in front of the chicken coop having fun with the angel, without the slightest reverence, tossing him things to eat through the openings in the wire as if he weren't a supernatural creature but a circus animal.

Father Gonzaga arrived before seven o'clock, alarmed at the strange news. By that time onlookers less frivolous than those at dawn had already arrived and they were making all kinds of conjectures concerning the captive's future. The simplest among them thought that he should be named mayor of the world. Others of sterner mind felt that he should be promoted to the rank of five-star general in order to win all wars. Some visionaries hoped that he could be put to stud in order to implant on earth a race of winged wise men who could take charge of the universe. But Father Gonzaga, before becoming a priest, had been a robust woodcutter. Standing by the wire, he reviewed his catechism in an instant and asked them to open the door so that he could take a close look at that pitiful man who looked more like a huge decrepit hen among the fascinated chickens. He was lying in the corner drying his open wings in the sunlight among the fruit peels and breakfast leftovers that the early risers had thrown him. Alien to the impertinences of the world, he only lifted his antiquarian eyes and murmured something in his dialect when Father Gonzaga went into the chicken coop and said good morning to him in Latin. The parish priest had his first suspicion of an imposter when he saw that he did not understand the language of God or know how to greet His ministers. Then he noticed that seen close up he was much too human: he had an unbearable smell of the outdoors, the back side of his wings was strewn with parasites and his main feathers had been mistreated by terrestrial winds, and nothing about him measured up to the proud dignity of angels. Then he came out of the chicken coop and in a brief sermon warned the curious against the risks of being ingenuous. He reminded them that the devil had the bad habit of making use of carnival tricks in order to confuse the unwary. He argued that if wings were not the essential element in determining the difference between a hawk and an airplane, they were even less so in the recognition of angels. Nevertheless, he promised to write a letter to his bishop so that the latter would write his primate so that the latter would write to the Supreme Pontiff in order to get the final verdict from the highest courts.

His prudence fell on sterile hearts. The news of the captive angel spread with such rapidity that after a few hours the courtyard had the bustle of a marketplace and they had to call in troops with fixed bayonets to disperse the mob that was about to knock the house down. Elisenda, her spine

all twisted from sweeping up so much marketplace trash, then got the idea of fencing in the yard and charging five cents admission to see the angel.

The curious came from far away. A traveling carnival arrived with a flying acrobat who buzzed over the crowd several times, but no one paid any attention to him because his wings were not those of an angel but, rather, those of a sidereal bat. The most unfortunate invalids on earth came in search of health: a poor woman who since childhood has been counting her heartbeats and had run out of numbers; a Portuguese man who couldn't sleep because the noise of the stars disturbed him; a sleepwalker who got up at night to undo the things he had done while awake; and many others with less serious ailments. In the midst of that shipwreck disorder that made the earth tremble, Pelayo and Elisenda were happy with fatigue, for in less than a week they had crammed their rooms with money and the line of pilgrims waiting their turn to enter still reached beyond the horizon.

The angel was the only one who took no part in his own act. He spent his time trying to get comfortable in his borrowed nest, befuddled by the hellish heat of the oil lamps and sacramental candles that had been placed along the wire. At first they tried to make him eat some mothballs, which, according to the wisdom of the wise neighbor woman, were the food prescribed for angels. But he turned them down, just as he turned down the papal lunches that the pentinents brought him, and they never found out whether it was because he was an angel or because he was an old man that in the end ate nothing but eggplant mush. His only supernatural virtue seemed to be patience. Especially during the first days, when the hens pecked at him, searching for the stellar parasites that proliferated in his wings, and the cripples pulled out feathers to touch their defective parts with, and even the most merciful threw stones at him, trying to get him to rise so they could see him standing. The only time they succeeded in arousing him was when they burned his side with an iron for branding steers, for he had been motionless for so many hours that they thought he was dead. He awoke with a start, ranting in his hermetic language and with tears in his eyes, and he flapped his wings a couple of times, which brought on a whirlwind of chicken dung and lunar dust and a gale of panic that did not seem to be of this world.

Although many thought that his reaction had not been one of rage but of pain, from then on they were careful not to annoy him, because the majority understood that his passivity was not that of a hero taking his ease but that of a cataclysm in repose.

Father Gonzaga held back the crowd's frivolity with formulas of maidservant inspiration while awaiting the arrival of a final judgment on the nature of the captive. But the mail from Rome showed no sense of urgency. They spent their time finding out if the prisoner had a navel, if his dialect had any connection with Aramaic, how many times he could fit on the head of a pin, or

whether he wasn't just a Norwegian with wings. Those meager letters might have come and gone until the end of time if a providential event had not put an end to the priest's tribulations.

It so happened that during those days, among so many other carnival attractions, there arrived in the town the traveling show of the woman who had been changed into a spider for having disobeyed her parents. The admission to see her was not only less than the admission to see the angel, but people were permitted to ask her all manner of questions about her absurd state and to examine her up and down so that no one would ever doubt the truth of her horror. She was a frightful tarantula the size of a ram and with the head of a sad maiden. What was most heartrending, however, was not her outlandish shape but the sincere affliction with which she recounted the details of her misfortune. While still practically a child she had sneaked out of her parents' house to go to a dance, and while she was coming back through the woods after having danced all night without permission, a fearful thunderclap rent the sky in two and through the crack came the lightning bolt of brimstone that changed her into a spider. Her only nourishment came from the meatballs that charitable souls chose to toss into her mouth. A spectacle like that, full of so much human truth and with such a fearful lesson, was bound to defeat without even trying that of a haughty angel who scarcely deigned to look at mortals. Besides, the few miracles attributed to the angel showed a certain mental disorder, like the blind man who didn't recover his sight but grew three new teeth, or the paralytic who didn't get to walk but almost won the lottery, and the leper whose sores sprouted sunflowers. Those consolation miracles, which were more like mocking fun, had already ruined the angel's reputation when the woman who had been changed into a spider finally crushed him completely. That was how Father Gonzaga was cured forever of his insomnia and Pelayo's courtyard went back to being as empty as during the time it had rained for three days and crabs walked through the bedrooms.

The owners of the house had no reason to lament. With the money they saved they built a two-story mansion with balconies and gardens and high netting so that crabs wouldn't get in during the winter, and with iron bars on the windows so that angels wouldn't get in. Pelayo also set up a rabbit warren close to town and gave up his job as a bailiff for good, and Elisenda bought some satin pumps with high heels and many dresses of iridescent silk, the kind worn on Sunday by the most desirable women in those times. The chicken coop was the only thing that didn't receive any attention. If they washed it down with creolin and burned tears of myrrh inside it every so often, it was not in homage to the angel but to drive away the dungheap stench that still hung everywhere like a ghost and was turning the new house into an old one. At first, when the child learned to walk, they were careful that he not get too close to the chicken coop. But then they began to lose their fears and got used to the smell, and before the child got his second teeth he'd gone inside the chicken coop to play, where the wires were falling apart. The angel was no less standoffish with him than with the other mortals, but he tolerated the most ingenious

infamies with the patience of a dog who had no illusions. They both came down with the chicken pox at the same time. The doctor who took care of the child couldn't resist the temptation to listen to the angel's heart, and he found so much whistling in the heart and so many sounds in his kidneys that it seemed impossible for him to be alive. What surprised him most, however, was the logic of his wings. They seemed so natural on that completely human organism that he couldn't understand why other men didn't have them too.

When the child began school it had been some time since the sun and rain had caused the collapse of the chicken coop. The angel went dragging himself about here and there like a stray dying man. They would drive him out of the bedroom with a broom and a moment later find him in the kitchen. He seemed to be in so many places at the same time that they grew to think that he'd be duplicated, that he was reproducing himself all through the house, and the exasperated and unhinged Elisenda shouted that it was awful living in that hell full of angels. He could scarcely eat and his antiquarian eyes had also become so foggy that he went about bumping into posts. All he had left were the bare cannulae of his last feathers. Pelayo threw a blanket over him and extended him the charity of letting him sleep in the shed, and only then did they notice that he had a temperature at night, and was delirious with the tongue twisters of an old Norwegian. That was one of the few times they became alarmed, for they thought he was going to die and not even the wise neighbor woman had been able to tell them what to do with dead angels.

And yet he not only survived his worst winter, but seemed improved with the first sunny days. He remained motionless for several days in the farthest corner of the courtyard, where no one would see him, and at the beginning of December some large, stiff feathers began to grow on his wings, the feathers of a scarecrow, which looked more like another misfortune of decrepitude. But he must have known the reason for those changes, for he was quite careful that no one should notice them, that no one should hear the sea chanteys that he sometimes sang under the stars. One morning Elisenda was cutting some bunches of onions for lunch when a wind that seemed to come from the high seas blew into the kitchen. Then she went to the window and caught the angel in his first attempts at flight. They were so clumsy that his fingernails opened a furrow in the vegetable patch and he was on the point of knocking the shed down with the ungainly flapping that slipped on the light and couldn't get a grip on the air. But he did manage to gain altitude. Elisenda let out a sigh of relief, for herself and for him, when she watched him pass over the last houses, holding himself up in some way with the risky flapping of a senile vulture. She kept watching him even when she was through cutting the onions and she kept on watching until it was no longer possible for her to see him, because then he was no longer an annoyance in her life but an imaginary dot on the horizon of the sea.

STORY 2

"A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings: A Tale for Children"

by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
(translated by Gregory Rabassa)

STORY 2 RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Your responses to the following questions should be at least one solid paragraph (topic sentence, at least six sentences that include details from the story and explanations/elaboration, concluding sentence).

3. Marquez (or Marquez's narrator) doesn't strain and struggle to force the reader to accept the elements of wonder in the story. If someone asked you to describe how the text compels you to treat the impossible as if it were totally unremarkable, what might you say? In other words, how does the story earn your cooperation?
4. What do you make of the story's subtitle -- "a tale for children"? Is this indeed a children's story? If not, is the subtitle ironic? And if it's ironic, how do you know? What clues does the text offer to point you toward the irony?

STORY 3

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Albert Camus

BIOGRAPHY AND BACKGROUND

In 1913, Albert Camus was born to European parents in Mondovi, Algeria, which was then a French colony. His father was killed in the first months of World War I. Camus was encouraged by an elementary school teacher who helped him win a scholarship to the French high school in Algiers, and he later studied philosophy at the University of Algiers. Camus lived and worked in Algeria exclusively until he was twenty-seven. Camus' plans for an academic career were sidetracked by recurring attacks of tuberculosis. To restore his health, he traveled to the French Alps and Italy, his first trip to Europe, returning to Algiers in the period before World War II. During this time, he briefly joined the Algerian Communist Party and established a theater that produced plays for working-class audiences. The theater was Camus' first love.

Camus worked as a journalist in Algiers, and during the Nazi occupation of France, he came to Paris where he edited a Resistance newspaper. Camus became a leader of the literary generation that arose from the French defeat in 1940 and the subsequent loss of its colonial empire. His name became forever linked with existentialism, and his writing reflected the sense of the "absurd" that characterized intellectual life in a Europe whose traditional values were destroyed during the war. Existential thought proposes that there is absolutely no inherent meaning in life, but that one must build meaning through actions and decisions. Camus instead favored the absurdist view that life has no inherent meaning and that it is humanly impossible to discover a meaning, even if it is there. Action and decision won't change this. The absurdist view would help explain why his character, Daru, wants to remain uninvolved and prefers nonaction.

"The Guest" takes place in Algeria during the last years of the French control there. He was interested in and concerned about the Algerian situation, but he refused to support either a violent revolution or the restriction of individuals' freedom. During the conflict, he concentrated only on sparing innocent civilians.

Camus was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1957. He died three years later in an automobile accident.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

"The Guest" is set on the eve of a violent rebellion by Algerians, headed by the Front de Liberation (FLN), against their French colonizers. The Algerian Revolution began in 1954 after 120 years of French rule. Camus died in 1960, two years before Algeria achieved independence, but, like Daru, Camus did not take a side during the revolution. He was the most well-known Algerian in both Algeria and France, and both sides depended heavily on his support. "The Guest" may be considered his attempt to express the personal difficulties he felt in judging the Algerian situation. Camus, who loved his Algerian homeland once stated, however, "Yes. I have a native land: the French language." He had lived to witness terrorism that swept Algeria and France in the 1950s.

Read the following excerpt by Camus from his text "Resistance, Rebellion, and Death":

When the fate of men and women of one's own blood is bound, directly or indirectly, to the articles one writes in the comfort of the study, one has a right to hesitate and to weigh the pros and cons. In my case, if I am aware that in criticizing the course of the rebellion I risk justifying the most brazen instigators of the Algerian drama, I never cease fearing that, by pointing out the long series of French mistakes, I may, without running any risk myself, provide an alibi for the insane criminal who may throw his bomb into an innocent crowd that includes my family. I went so far as to admit this fact boldly in a recent declaration which was commented upon most strangely. But anyone who does not know the situation I am talking about can hardly judge of it. And if anyone, knowing it, still thinks heroically that one's brother must die rather than one's principles, I shall go no farther than to admire him from a distance. I am not of his stamp.

This does not mean that principles have no meaning. An opposition of ideas is possible, even with weapons in hand, and it is only fair to recognize one's opponent's reasons even before defending oneself against him. But on both sides a reign of terror, as long as it lasts, changes the scale of values. When one's own family is in immediate danger of death, one may want to instill in one's family a feeling of greater generosity and fairness, as these articles clearly show; but (let there be no doubt about it!) one still feels a natural solidarity with the family in such mortal danger and hopes that it will survive at least and, by surviving, have a chance to show its fairness. If that is not honor and true justice, then I know nothing that is of any use in this world.

Only from such a position have we the right and the duty to state that military combat and repression have, on our side, taken on aspects that we cannot accept. Reprisals against civilian populations and the use of torture are crimes in which we are all involved. The fact that such things could take place among us is humiliation we must henceforth face. Meanwhile, we must at least refuse to justify such methods, even on the score of efficacy. The moment they are justified, even indirectly, there are no more rules or values; all causes are equally good, and war without

arms or laws sanctions the triumph of nihilism. Willy-nilly, we go back in that case to the jungle where the sole principle is violence. Even those who are fed up with morality ought to realize that it is better to suffer certain injustices than to commit them even to win wars, and that such deeds do us more harm than a hundred underground forces on the enemy's side. When excuses are made, for instance, for those who do not hesitate to slaughter the innocent in Algeria or, in other places, to torture or to condone torture, are they not also incalculable errors since they may justify the very crimes we want to fight? And what is that efficacy whereby we manage to justify everything that is most unjustifiable in our adversary?

Watch the short video (under 10 minutes) at the link below for more context that will be helpful in understanding the story:

Camus, The Nobel Prize & Algerian War (BBC Documentary)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sz2dTyDfNAw>

STORY 3

"The Guest" by Albert Camus (translated by Justin O'Brien)

The schoolmaster was watching the two men climb toward him. One was on horseback, the other on foot. They had not yet tackled the abrupt rise leading to the schoolhouse built on the hillside. They were toiling onward, making slow progress in the snow, among the stones, on the vast expanse of the high, deserted plateau. From time to time the horse stumbled. Without hearing anything yet, he could see the breath issuing from the horse's nostrils. One of the men, at least, knew the region. They were following the trail although it had disappeared days ago under a layer of dirty white snow. The schoolmaster calculated that it would take them half an hour to get onto the hill. It was cold; he went back into the school to get a sweater.

He crossed the empty, frigid classroom. On the blackboard the four rivers of France,¹ drawn with four different colored chalks, had been flowing toward their estuaries for the past three days. Snow had suddenly fallen in mid-October after eight months of drought without the transition of rain, and the twenty pupils, more or less, who lived in the villages scattered over the plateau had stopped coming. With fair weather they would return. Daru now heated only the single room that was lodging, adjoining the classroom and giving also onto the plateau to the east. Like the class cows, his window looked to the south too. On that side the school was a few kilometers from the point where the plateau began to slope toward the south. In clear weather could be seen the purple mass of the mountain range where the gap opened onto the desert.

Somewhat warmed, Daru returned to the window from which he had first seen the two men. They were no longer visible. Hence they must have tackled the rise. The sky was not so dark, for the snow had stopped falling during the night. The morning had opened with a dirty light which had scarcely become brighter as the ceiling of clouds lifted. At two in the afternoon it seemed as if the day were merely beginning. But still this was better than those three days when the thick snow was falling amidst unbroken darkness with little gusts of wind that rattled the double door of the classroom. Then Daru had spent long hours in his room, leaving it only to go to the shed and feed the chickens or get some coal. Fortunately the delivery truck from Tadjid, the nearest village to the north, had brought his supplies two days before the blizzard. It would return in forty-eight hours.

Besides, he had enough to resist a siege, for the little room was cluttered with bags of wheat that the administration left as a stock to distribute to those of his pupils whose families had suffered

from the drought. Actually they had all been victims because they were all poor. Every day Daru would distribute a ration to the children. They had missed it, he knew, during these bad days. Possibly one of the fathers would come this afternoon and he could supply them with grain. It was just a matter of carrying them over to the next harvest. Now shiploads of wheat were arriving from France and the worst was over. But it would be hard to forget that poverty, that army of ragged ghosts wandering in the sunlight, the plateaus burned to a cinder month after month, the earth shriveled up little by little, literally scorched, every stone bursting into dust under one's foot. The sheep had died then by thousands and even a few men, here and there, sometimes without anyone's knowing.

In contrast with such poverty, he who lived almost like a monk in his remote schoolhouse, nonetheless satisfied with the little he had and with the rough life, had felt like a lord with his whitewashed walls, his narrow couch, his unpainted shelves, his well, and his weekly provision of water and food. And suddenly this snow, without warning, without the foretaste of rain. This is the way the region was, cruel to live in, even without men--who didn't help matters either. But Daru had been born here. Everywhere else, he felt exiled.

He stepped out onto the terrace in front of the schoolhouse. The two men were now halfway up the slope. He recognized the horseman as Balducci the old gendarme he had known for a long time. Balducci was holding on the end of a rope an Arab who was walking behind him with hands bound and head lowered. The gendarme waved a greeting to which Daru did not reply, lost as he was in contemplation of the Arab dressed in a faded blue jellaba,² his feet in sandals but covered with socks of heavy raw wool, his head surmounted by a narrow, short cheche. They were approaching. Balducci was holding back his horse in order not to hurt the Arab, and the group was advancing slowly.

Within earshot, Balducci shouted: "One hour to do the three kilometers from El Aneur!" Daru did not answer. Short and square in his thick sweater he watched them climb. Not once had the Arab raised his head. "Hello," said Daru when they got up onto the terrace. "Come in and warm up." Balducci painfully got down from his horse without letting go of the rope. From under his bristling mustache he smiled at the schoolmaster. His little dark eyes, deep-set under a tanned forehead, and his mouth surrounded with wrinkles made him look attentive and studious. Daru took the bridle and led the horse to the shed, and came back to the two men, who were now waiting for him in the school. He led them into his room "I am going to heat up the classroom," he said. "We'll be more comfortable there." When he entered the room again, Balducci was on the couch. He had undone the rope tying him to the Arab, who had squashed near the stove. His hands still bound, the cheche pushed back on his head, he was looking toward the window. At first Daru noticed only his huge lips, fat, smooth, almost Negroid; yet his nose was straight, his

eyes were dark and full of fever. The cheche revealed an obstinate forehead and, under the weathered skin now rather discolored by the cold, the whole face had a restless and rebellious look that struck Daru when the Arab, turning his face toward him, looked him straight in the eyes. "Go into the other room," said the schoolmaster "and I'll make you some mint tea." "Thanks," Balducci said. "what a chore! How I long for retirement." And addressing his prisoner in Arabic: "Come on, you." The Arab got up and, slowly, holding his bound wrists in front of him, went into the classroom.

With the tea, Daru brought a chair. But Balducci was already enthroned on the nearest pupil's desk and the Arab had squatted against the teacher's platform facing the stove, which stood between the desk and the window. When he held out the glass of tea to the prisoner, Daru hesitated at the sight of his bound hands. "He might perhaps be untied." "Sure," said Balducci. "That was for the trip." He started to get to his feet. But Daru, setting the glass on the floor, had knelt beside the Arab. Without saying anything, the Arab watched him with his feverish eyes. Once his hands were free, he rubbed his swollen wrists against each other, took the glass of tea, and sucked up the burning liquid in swift little sips.

"Good," said Daru.

"And where are you headed?" Balducci withdrew his mustache from the tea. "Here, Son."

"Odd pupils! And you're spending the night?"

"No. I'm going back to El Aneur. And you will deliver this fellow to Tinguit. He is expected at police headquarters." Balducci was looking at Daru with a friendly little smile. "What's this story?" asked the schoolmaster. "Are you pulling my leg?" "No, son. Those are the orders." "The orders? I'm not . . ." Daru hesitated, not wanting to hurt the old Corsican.³ "I mean, that's not my job." "What! What's the meaning of that? In wartime people do all kinds of jobs." "Then I'll wait for the declaration of war!" Balducci nodded. "O. K. But the orders exist and they concern you too. Things are brewing, it appears. There is talk of a forthcoming revolt. We are mobilized, in a way." Daru still had his obstinate look.

"Listen, Son," Balducci said. "I like you and you must understand. There's only a dozen of us at El Aneur to patrol throughout the whole territory of a small department⁴ and I must get back in a hurry. I was told to hand this guy over to you and return without delay. He couldn't be kept there. His village was beginning to stir; they wanted to take him back. You must take him to Tinguit tomorrow before the day is over. Twenty kilometers shouldn't faze a husky fellow like you. After that, all will be over. You'll come back to your pupils and your comfortable life."

Behind the wall the horse could be heard snorting and pawing the earth. Daru was looking out the window. Decidedly, the weather was clearing and the light was increasing over the snowy plateau. When all the snow had melted, the sun would take over again and once more would burn the fields of stone. For days, still, the unchanging sky would shed its dry light on the solitary expanse where nothing had any connection with man.

"After all," he said, turning around toward Balducci, "what did he do?" And, before the gendarme had opened his mouth, he asked: "Does he speak French?" "No, not a word. We had been looking for him for a month, but they were hiding him. He killed his cousin."

"Is he against us?"

"I don't think so. But you can never be sure." "Why did he kill?" "A family squabble, I think one owned the other grain, it seems. It's not all clear. In short, he killed his cousin with a billhook. You know, like a sheep, kreezk!" Balducci made the gesture of drawing a blade across his throat and the Arab, his attention attracted, watched him with a sort of anxiety. Daru felt a sudden wrath against the mall, against all men with their rotten spite, their tireless hates, their blood lust.

But the kettle was singing on the stove. He served Balducci more tea, hesitated, then served the Arab again, who, a second time, drank avidly his raised arms made the jellaba fall open and the schoolmaster saw his thin, muscular chest.

"Thanks, kid," Balducci said. "And now, I'm off." He got up and went toward the Arab, taking a small rope from his pocket. "What are you doing?" Daru asked dryly. Balducci, disconcerted, showed him the rope. "Don't bother." The old gendarme hesitated. "It's up to you. Of course, you are armed?" "I have my shotgun." "Where?" "In the trunk."

"You ought to have it near your bed." "Why? I have nothing to fear." "You're crazy, son. If there's an uprising, no one is safe, we're all in the same boat." "I'll defend myself. I'll have time to see them coming." Balducci began to laugh, then suddenly the mustache covered the white teeth. "You'll have time? O.K. That's just what I was saying. You have always been a little cracked. That's why I like you, my son was like that." At the same time he took out his revolver and put it on the desk. "Keep it; I don't need two weapons from here to El Aneur." The revolver shone against the black paint of the table. When the gendarme turned toward him, the schoolmaster caught the smell of leather and horseflesh. "Listen, Balducci," Daru said suddenly, "every bit of this disgusts me, and first of all your fellow here. But I won't hand him over. Fight, yes, if I have to. But not that." The old gendarme stood in front of him and looked at him severely.

"You're being a fool," he said slowly. "I don't like it either. You don't get used to putting a rope on a man even after years of it, and you're even ashamed - yes, ashamed. But you can't let them have their way." "I won't hand him over," Daru said again. "It's an order, son, and I repeat it." "That's right. Repeat to them what I've said to you: I won't hand him over."

Balducci made a visible effort to reflect. He looked at the Arab and at Daru. At last he decided.

"No, I won't tell them anything. If you want to drop us, go ahead. I'll not denounce you. I have an order to deliver the prisoner and I'm doing so. And now you'll just sign this paper for me."

"There's no need. I'll not deny that you left him with me."

"Don't be mean with me. I know you'll tell the truth. You're from hereabouts and you are a man. But you must sign, that's the rule." Daru opened his drawer, took out a little square bottle of purple ink, the red wooden penholder with the "sergeant-major" pen he used for making models of penmanship, and signed. The gendarme carefully folded the paper and put it into his wallet. Then he moved toward the door. "I'll see you off," Daru said. "No," said Balducci. "There's no use being polite. You insulted me."

He looked at the Arab, motionless in the same spot, sniffed peevishly, and turned away toward the door. "Good-by, son," he said. The door shut behind him. Balducci appeared suddenly outside the window and then disappeared. His footsteps were muffled by the snow. The horse stirred on the other side of the wall and several chickens fluttered in fright. A moment later Balducci reappeared outside the window leading the horse by the bridle. He walked toward the little rise without turning around and disappeared from sight with the horse following him. A big stone could be heard bouncing down. Daru walked back toward the prisoner, who, without stirring, never took his eyes off him.

"Wait," the schoolmaster said in Arabic and went toward the bedroom. As he was going through the door, he had a second thought, went to the desk, took the revolver, and stuck it in his pocket. Then, without looking back, he went into his room.

For some time he lay on his couch watching the sky gradually close over, listening to the silence. It was this silence that had seemed painful to him during the first days here, after the war. He had requested a post in the little town at the base of the foothills separating the upper plateaus from the desert. There, rocky walls, green and black to the north, pink and lavender to the south, marked the frontier of eternal summer. He had been named to a post farther north, on the plateau itself. In the beginning, the solitude and the silence had been hard for him on these wastelands

peopled only by stones. Occasionally, furrows suggested cultivation, but they had been dug to uncover a certain kind of stone good for building. The only plowing here was to harvest rocks. Elsewhere a thin layer of soil accumulated in the hollows would be scraped out to enrich paltry village gardens. This is the way it was: bare rock covered three quarters of the region. Towns sprang up, flourished, then disappeared; men came by, loved one another or fought bitterly, then died. No one in this desert, neither he nor his guest, mattered. And yet, outside this desert neither or them, Daru knew, could have really lived.

When he got up, no noise came from the classroom. He was amazed at the unmixed joy he derived from the mere thought that the Arab might have fled and that he would be alone with no decision to make. But the prisoner was there. He had merely stretched out between the stove and the desk. With eyes open, he was staring at the ceiling. In that position, his thick lips were particularly noticeable, giving him a pouting look. "Come," said Daru. The Arab got up and followed him. In the bedroom, the schoolmaster pointed to a chair near the table under the window. The Arab sat down without taking his eyes off Daru.

"Are you hungry?" "Yes," the prisoner said.

Daru set the table for two. He took flour and oil, shaped a cake in a frying-pan, and lighted the little stove that functioned on bottled gas. While the cake was cooking, he went out to the shed to get cheese, eggs, dates and condensed milk. When the cake was done he set it on the window sill to cool, heated some condensed milk diluted with water, and beat up the eggs into an omelette. In one of his motions he knocked against the revolver stuck in his right pocket. He set the bowl down, went into the classroom and put the revolver in his desk drawer. When he came back to the room night was falling. He put on the light and served the Arab. "Eat," he said. The Arab took a piece of the cake, lifted it eagerly to his mouth, and stopped short.

"And you?" he asked.

"After you. I'll eat too."

The thick lips opened slightly. The Arab hesitated, then bit into the cake determinedly.

The meal over, the Arab looked at the schoolmaster. "Are you the judge?" "No, I'm simply keeping you until tomorrow." "Why do you eat with me?" "I'm hungry."

The Arab fell silent. Daru got up and went out. He brought back a folding bed from the shed, set it up between the table and the stove, perpendicular to his own bed. From a large suitcase which,

upright in a corner, served as a shelf for papers, he took two blankets and arranged them on the camp bed. Then he stopped, felt useless, and sat down on his bed. There was nothing more to do or to get ready. He had to look at this man. He looked at him, therefore, trying to imagine his face bursting with rage. He couldn't do so. He could see nothing but the dark yet shining eyes and the animal mouth.

"Why did you kill him?" he asked in a voice whose hostile tone surprised him. The Arab looked away. "He ran away. I ran after him." He raised his eyes to Daru again and they were full of a sort of woeful interrogation.

"Now what will they do to me?" "Are you afraid?" He stiffened, turning his eyes away. "Are you sorry?" The Arab stared at him openmouthed. Obviously he did not understand. Daru's annoyance was growing. At the same time he felt awkward and self-conscious with his big body wedged between the two beds.

"Lie down there," he said impatiently. "That's your bed."

The Arab didn't move. He called to Daru: "Tell me!" The schoolmaster looked at him. "Is the gendarme coming back tomorrow?" "I don't know."

"Are you coming with us?" "I don't know. Why?" The prisoner got up and stretched out on top of the blankets, his feet toward the window. The light from the electric bulb shone straight into his eyes and he closed them at once.

"Why?" Daru repeated, standing beside the bed.

The Arab opened his eyes under the blinding light and looked at him, trying not to blink.

"Come with us," he said.

In the middle of the night, Daru was still not asleep. He had gone to bed after undressing completely; he generally slept naked. But when he suddenly realized that he had nothing on, he hesitated. He felt vulnerable and the temptation came to him to put his clothes back on. Then he shrugged his shoulders; after all, he wasn't a child and, if need be, he could break his adversary in two. From his bed he could observe him, lying on his back, still motionless with his eyes closed under the harsh light. When Daru turned out the light, the darkness seemed to coagulate all of a sudden. Little by little, the night came back to life in the window where the starless sky was stirring gently. The schoolmaster soon made out the body lying at his feet. The Arab still did

not move, but his eyes seemed open. A light wind was prowling around the schoolhouse. Perhaps it would drive away the clouds and the sun would reappear.

During the night the wind increased. The hens fluttered a little and then were silent. The Arab turned over on his side with his back to Daru, who thought he heard him moan. Then he listened for his guest's breathing, become heavier and more regular. He listened to that breath so close to him and mused without being able to go to sleep. In this room where he had been sleeping alone for a year, this presence bothered him. But it bothered him also by imposing on him a sort of brotherhood he knew well but refused to accept in the present circumstances. Men who share the same rooms, soldiers or prisoners, develop a strange alliance as if, having cast off their armor with their clothing, they fraternized every evening, over and above their differences, in the ancient community of dream and fatigue. But Daru shook himself; he didn't like such musings, and it was essential to sleep.

A little later, however, when the Arab stirred slightly, the schoolmaster was still not asleep. When the prisoner made a second move, he stiffened, on the alert. The Arab was lifting himself slowly on his arms with almost the motion of a sleepwalker. Seated upright in bed, he waited motionless without turning his head toward Daru, as if he were listening attentively. Daru did not stir; it had just occurred to him that the revolver was still in the drawer of his desk. It was better to act at once. Yet he continued to observe the prisoner, who, with the same slithery motion, put his feet on the ground, waited again, then began to stand up slowly. Daru was about to call out to him when the Arab began to walk, in a quite natural but extraordinarily silent way. He was heading toward the door at the end of the room that opened into the shed. He lifted the latch with precaution and went out, pushing the door behind him but without shutting it. Daru had not stirred. "He is running away," he merely thought. "Good riddance!" Yet he listened attentively. The hens were not fluttering; the guest must be on the plateau. A faint sound of water reached him, and he didn't know what it was until the Arab again stood framed in the doorway, closed the door carefully, and came back to bed without a sound. Then Daru turned his back on him and fell asleep. Still later he seemed, from the depths of his sleep, to hear furtive steps around the schoolhouse. "I'm dreaming! I'm dreaming!" he repeated to himself. And he went on sleeping.

When he awoke, the sky was clear; the loose window let in a cold, pure air. The Arab was asleep, hunched up under the blankets now, his mouth open, utterly relaxed. But when Daru shook him, he started dreadfully staring at Daru with wild eyes as if he had never seen him and such a frightened expression that the schoolmaster stepped back. "Don't be afraid. It's me. You must eat." The Arab nodded his head and said yes. Calm had returned to his face, but his expression was vacant and listless.

The coffee was ready. They drank it seated together on the folding bed as they munched their pieces of the cake. Then Daru led the Arab under the shed and showed him the faucet where he washed. He went back into the room, folded the blankets and the bed, made his own bed and put the room in order. Then he went through the classroom and out onto the terrace. The sun was already rising in the blue sky; a soft, bright light was bathing the deserted plateau. On the ridge the snow was melting in spots. The stones were about to reappear. Crouched on the edge of the plateau, the schoolmaster looked at the deserted expanse. He thought of Balducci. He had hurt him, for he had sent him off in a way as if he didn't want to be associated with him. He could still hear the gendarme's farewell and, without knowing why, he felt strangely empty and vulnerable. At that moment, from the other side of the schoolhouse, the prisoner coughed. Daru listened to him almost despite himself and then furious, threw a pebble that whistled through the air before sinking into the snow. That man's stupid crime revolted him, but to hand him over was contrary to honor. Merely thinking of it made him smart with humiliation. And he cursed at one and the same time his own people who had sent him this Arab and the Arab too who had dared to kill and not managed to get away. Daru got up, walked in a circle on the terrace, waited motionless, and then went back into the schoolhouse.

The Arab, leaning over the cement floor of the shed, was washing his teeth with two fingers. Daru looked at him and said: "Come." He went back into the room ahead of the prisoner. He slipped a hunting-jacket on over his sweater and put on walking-shoes. Standing, he waited until the Arab had put on his cheche and sandals. They went into the classroom and the schoolmaster pointed to the exit, saying: "Go ahead." The fellow didn't budge. "I'm coming," said Daru. The Arab went out. Daru went back into the room and made a package of pieces of rusk, dates, and sugar. In the classroom, before going out, he hesitated a second in front of his desk, then crossed the threshold and locked the door. "That's the way," he said. He started toward the east, followed by the prisoner. But, a short distance from the schoolhouse, he thought he heard a slight sound behind them. He retraced his steps and examined the surroundings of the house, there was no one there. The Arab watched him without seeming to understand. "Come on," said Daru.

They walked for an hour and rested beside a sharp peak of limestone. The snow was melting faster and faster and the sun was drinking up the puddles at once, rapidly cleaning the plateau, which gradually dried and vibrated like the air itself. When they resumed walking, the ground rang under their feet. From time to time a bird rent the space in front of them with a joyful cry. Daru breathed in deeply the fresh morning light. He felt a sort of rapture before the vast familiar expanse, now almost entirely yellow under its dome of blue sky. They walked an hour more, descending toward the south. They reached a level height made up of crumbly rocks. From there on, the plateau sloped down, eastward, toward a low plain where there were a few spindly trees and, to the south, toward outcroppings of rock that gave the landscape a chaotic look.

Daru surveyed the two directions. There was nothing but the sky on the horizon. Not a man could be seen. He turned toward the Arab, who was looking at him blankly. Daru held out the package to him. "Take it," he said. "There are dates, bread, and sugar. You can hold out for two days. Here are a thousand francs too." The Arab took the package and the money but kept his full hands at chest level as if he didn't know what to do with what was being given him. "Now look," the schoolmaster said as he pointed in the direction of the east, "there's the way to Tinguit. You have a two-hour walk. At Tinguit you'll find the administration and the police. They are expecting you." The Arab looked toward the east, still holding the package and the money against his chest. Daru took his elbow and turned him rather roughly toward the south. At the foot of the height on which they stood could be seen a faint path. "That's the trail across the plateau. In a day's walk from here you'll find pasturelands and the first nomads. They'll take you in and shelter you according to their law." The Arab had now turned toward Daru and a sort of panic was visible in his expression. "Listen," he said. Daru shook his head: "No, be quiet. Now I'm leaving you." He turned his back on him, took two long steps in the direction of the school, looking hesitantly at the motionless Arab and started off again. For a few minutes he heard nothing but his own step resounding on the cold ground and did not turn his head. A moment later however he turned around. The Arab was still there on the edge of the hill his arms hanging now, and he was looking at the schoolmaster. Daru felt something rise in his throat. But he swore with impatience, waved vaguely, and started off again. He had already gone some distance when he again stopped and looked. There was no longer anyone on the hill.

Daru hesitated. The sun was now rather high in the sky and was beginning to beat down on his head. The schoolmaster retraced his steps at first somewhat uncertainly then with decision. When he reached the little hill he was bathed in sweat. He climbed it as fast as he could and stopped. Out of breath at the top. The rock-fields to the south stood out sharply against the blue sky but on the plain to the east a steamy heat was already rising. And in that slight haze Daru with heavy heart made out the Arab walking slowly on the road to prison.

A little later standing before the window of the classroom the school master was watching the clear light bathing the whole surface of the plateau but he hardly saw it. Behind him on the blackboard among the winding French rivers sprawled the clumsily chalked-up words he had just read. "You handed over our brother. You will pay for this." Daru looked at the sky, the plateau and beyond the invisible lands stretching all the way to the sea. In this vast landscape he had loved so much, he was alone.

NOTES:

1. The Seine, Loire, Rhone, and Gironder rivers; French geography was taught in the French colonies. Back to text
2. A long hooded robe worn by Arabs in North Africa. Cheche: Scarf; here wound as a turban around the head.
3. Balducci is a native of Corsica, a French island north of Sardinia.
4. French administrative and territorial division: like a county.

STORY 3

"The Guest" by Albert Camus (translated by Justin O'Brien)

STORY 3 RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Your responses to the following questions should be at least one solid paragraph (topic sentence, at least six sentences that include details from the story and explanations/elaboration, concluding sentence).

5. Why do you think Camus titled this story "The Guest"? The French title of this story is "L'Hôte" which translates as "the guest" and "the host." Balducci is a guest, yet what about Daru?
6. Camus includes the detail that Daru generally sleeps in the nude. This, of course, is not to be taken in a sexual sense, but in the context that Daru "suddenly realized" he was nude. Why would Camus include this detail? What deeper connection does this have to Daru's situation (think about the possible danger, the task he's been given, the broader political context, etc.)?
7. Why do you think Daru gave the Arab an opportunity to escape? Why does Balducci choose not to escape? What is Camus trying to communicate as a result of the choices that these characters make?

STORY 4

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jamaica Kincaid

BIOGRAPHY AND BACKGROUND

Jamaica Kincaid was born in 1949 as Elaine Potter Richardson on the island of Antigua. She lived with her stepfather, a carpenter, and her mother until 1965 when she was sent to Westchester, New York to work as an au pair. In Antigua, she completed her secondary education under the British system due to Antigua's status as a British colony until 1967. She went on to study photography at the New York School for Social Research after leaving the family for which she worked, and also attended Franconia College in New Hampshire for a year. Her first writing experience involved a series of articles for *Ingenué* magazine. In 1973, she changed her name to Jamaica Kincaid because her family disapproved of her writing. Through her writing, she befriended George W.S. Trow, a writer for *The New Yorker*, who began writing "Talk of the Town" pieces about her. As a result, Kincaid met the editor of the magazine, William Shawn, who offered her a job. Kincaid later married Shawn's son, Allen, a composer and Bennington College professor, and they now have two children. Kincaid is an avid gardener and has written several pieces, short and long, on the subject.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Antigua became self-governing in 1967, but did not achieve the status of an independent nation within the Commonwealth until 1981. Within the structure of the British educational system imposed upon Antiguans, Kincaid grew to "detest everything about England, except the literature" (Vorda 79). She felt first-hand the negative effects of British colonialism as the colonists attempted to turn Antigua "into England" and the natives "into English" without regard for the native culture or homeland (Kincaid 24). The effects of colonialism serve as the major theme for *A Small Place* in which Kincaid expresses her anger both at the colonists and at the Antiguans for failing to fully achieve their independence. She feels that Antiguans failed to adopt the positive aspects of colonialism, for instance a good educational system which might help the population to improve their lives. This inability to promote the importance of education and hope for the future is symbolized in the failure to rebuild Antigua's only library, St. John's, which was "damaged in the earthquake of 1974" and years later, still carries the sign "REPAIRS ARE PENDING" (Kincaid 9).

The uncomfortable mother-daughter bond in "Girl" resonates thematically with the concerns Kincaid explores in many of her longer works. Because colonialism involves politics and public

life, often thought to be male spheres of influence, Kincaid's *Annie John*, *Autobiography of My Mother*, and *At the Bottom of the River* provide the opportunity to explore Kincaid's relationship with her mother as well as her development of identity in light of cultural expectations. *Lucy*, in turn, incorporates these cultural expectations and how they result in different interpretations of the same events. Kincaid also examines a mother's role in her daughter's socialization and explores the ideas of love, affection, hostility, death and their impact on self-discovery. In fact, in an interview with Kay Bonetti, Kincaid states, "I don't really write about men unless they have something to do with a woman."

STORY 4

“Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid

Wash the white clothes on Monday and put them on the stone heap; wash the color clothes on Tuesday and put them on the clothesline to dry; don't walk barehead in the hot sun; cook pumpkin fritters in very hot sweet oil; soak your little cloths right after you take them off; when buying cotton to make yourself a nice blouse, be sure that it doesn't have gum on it, because that way it won't hold up well after a wash; soak salt fish overnight before you cook it; is it true that you sing benna¹ in Sunday school?; always eat your food in such a way that it won't turn someone else's stomach; on Sundays try to walk like a lady and not like the slut you are so bent on becoming; don't sing benna in Sunday school; you mustn't speak to wharf-rat boys, not even to give directions; don't eat fruits on the street--flies will follow you; but I don't sing benna on Sundays at all and never in Sunday school; this is how to sew on a button; this is how to make a buttonhole for the button you have just sewed on; this is how to hem a dress when you see the hem coming down and to prevent yourself from looking like the slut you are so bent on becoming; this is how you iron your father's khaki shirt so that it doesn't have a crease; this is how you iron your father's khaki pants so that they don't have a crease; this is how you grow okra--far from the house, because okra tree harbors red ants; when you are growing dasheen,² make sure it gets plenty of water or else it makes your throat itch when you are eating it; this is how you sweep a corner; this is how you sweep a whole house; this is how you sweep a yard; this is how you smile to someone you don't like too much; this is how you smile at someone you don't like at all; this is how you smile to someone you like completely; this is how you set a table for tea; this is how you set a table for dinner; this is how you set a table for dinner with an important guest; this is how you set a table for lunch; this is how you set a table for breakfast;

this is how to behave in the presence of men who don't know you very well, and this way they won't recognize immediately the slut I have warned you against becoming; be sure to wash every day, even if it is with your own spit; don't swat down to play marbles--you are not a boy, you know; don't pick people's flowers--you might catch something; don't throw stones at blackbirds, because it might not be a blackbird at all; this is how to make a bread pudding; this is how to make doukona;³ this is how to make pepper pot; this is how to make a good medicine for a cold; this is how to make a good medicine to throw away a child before it even becomes a child; this is how to catch a fish; this is how to throw back a fish you don't like and that way something bad won't fall on you; this is how to bully a man; this is how a man bullies you; this is how to love a man, and if this doesn't work there are other ways, and if they don't work don't feel too bad about giving up; this is how to spit up in the air if you feel like it, and this is how to move quick so that it doesn't fall on you; this is how to make ends meet; always squeeze bread to make sure it's fresh; but what if the baker won't let me feel the bread?; you mean to say that after all you are really going to be the kind of woman who the baker won't let near the bread?

NOTES:

1. Calypso songs
2. A tropical plant that has starchy corms and edible leaves
3. A kind of pudding made from starchy food that is sweetened, spiced, and traditionally wrapped in plantain or banana leaf

STORY 4

“Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid

STORY 4 RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Your responses to the following questions should be at least one solid paragraph (topic sentence, at least six sentences that include details from the story and explanations/elaboration, concluding sentence).

8. The story relies on the imperative mood, which means the narrator gives commands (Do this. Do that. Don't do this.). What effect(s) does this choice create? What is the difference between, for example, “Cook pumpkin fritters in very hot, sweet oil,” which is the phrasing Kincaid’s narrator uses, and “She always tells me to cook pumpkin fritters in very hot, sweet oil.” If we stripped away the commands, what would the story lose? How would it change?
9. Many of Kincaid’s words and phrases seem harmless enough on their own, but the word “slut” stands out as blunt, harsh, condemnatory. Why might Kincaid, who could have arrived at a similar point without such a charged word, risk using an offensive term? Given that we understand the narrator to be a mother speaking to her daughter, what impact does the word have in this context that it might not have elsewhere?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: COLONIALISM

“Postcolonial Literature: Africa and Asia”

The term *postcolonial* is used variously and is a subject of considerable debate. It can denote the historical period immediately following decolonization, when a country, state, or people ceases to be governed by a colonial power and takes administrative control into their own hands. It can also refer to writing that sets out to resist colonial perspectives. Within the academic field of postcolonial studies, *postcolonial* is wide ranging in application, embracing history, politics, the arts, anthropology, and psychology as these disciplines help to elucidate the impacts of colonialism from the time of its inception through decolonization and its aftermath. Postcolonial literature, broadly defined, is writing produced by individuals from nations with distinct histories of colonialism. Colonialism in this context is understood to mean the imperialist practice of First World powers in Third World regions--the seizing of land and the political apparatus from the native population by the occupying power, often by force, and the imposition of the occupying power's value systems, language, and culture upon the natives. Just as the spread of Western colonialism across the globe was often violent and inhumane, so the process of decolonization and postcolonial nation-building has been traumatic, uneven, and fraught with hostilities. In the years following World War II, an unprecedented wave of political instability and revolution transformed the world map, dismantling European and North American colonial rule throughout the world.

Postcolonial literatures, wherever they originate--Asia or Africa, Australia or South America, Latin America or island locales--record a history of violent racism that stands in stark contrast to the versions of colonialism offered in the official histories of Empire, which usually portray the process of expansion as a civilizing mission in backward societies. Postcolonial literatures describe the political upheaval of decolonization in view of the origins and impacts of Empire, its dissolution, and its long-term effects. Critic Jahan Ramazani writes, "Decolonization involves reimagining and reintegrating a mythical and historical past for the indigenous community, repopulating that past with a different cast of heroes, heroines, and perhaps even villains. ... To enable the emergence of freshly reconstituted communities and national identities, decolonization thus requires nothing less than the imaginative remaking of both space--the once expropriated topography--and time--the collective historical experience of that place." In the earliest days of liberation, postcolonial literature and culture in Asia and Africa was intimately tied to the project of nation-building. Many writers were drawn to the novel of social realism, documenting the heroic struggle for freedom and envisioning a post-independence renaissance. Novels also commonly took the form of the *bildungsroman*, where the protagonist's search for identity mirrored that of the nation; or the romance, where the male hero pursues a beautiful village girl who is representative of the abstract ideal of nation. Writers of all types sought to establish national legitimacy and reclaim an authentic past erased by white colonial expansion.

Colonialism depends for its existence on the subjugation of the locals to the regime of the more powerful invading country or state. Colonial rule operates according to a set of hierarchical assumptions central to maintaining its influence. During the colonial period most closely associated with the burgeoning of twentieth-century postcolonial literature, native peoples were positioned in relation to the colonials as unruly savages in desperate need of reform, education, and religion. Much postcolonial literature has focused on deconstructing the binary oppositions--Self/Other, West/East, civilized/uncivilized, Christian/pagan--that relegated the indigenous populations to a position of inferiority. This has been especially true in the writings of the 1970s and beyond, when the euphoria of independence had waned in the face of continuing social and economic inequality and, in many instances, civil war. In some of the newly liberated countries of Africa, for example, one system of oppression has merely been replaced by another, the result, it is frequently argued, of continuing Western influence and capitalist exploitation. In order to more effectively critique these new post-independence realities, postcolonial writers have frequently employed the techniques of postmodernism, redeploying Western literary devices in the service of the ongoing anticolonial project. Monolithic theories of representation and authority associated with Western hegemony have been subverted through such strategies as temporal and spatial dislocations, multiple narrative perspectives, and hybrid language forms, all of which have served to subvert neocolonial notions of gender, class, and race informed by the colonial legacy of patriarchy. These experimental strategies have created a space for the articulation of voices silenced by economic, social, religious, or sexual difference.

Postcolonial literary studies came into existence to accommodate the efflorescence of creative writing that accompanied the decolonization of a series of states in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean beginning in the late 1940s and continuing through the 1960s. The dismantling of the British Empire led to the establishment of the British Commonwealth, which joined together the former British colonies. Courses in Commonwealth Literature became a part of the curriculum in English departments in Britain and were soon introduced in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere, sometimes under the label of "new literatures in English" or "world literatures in English." In the United States, these texts were often read as part of area studies programs, such as African Studies, Asian Studies, or Third World Studies. These models were then reinvented under the term *postcolonial*. The popularity of postcolonial literatures, with their emphasis on restoring agency to the disenfranchised and marginalized, was helped along by the introduction of feminist and multicultural studies to university curriculums in the late 1970s.

Postcolonial literatures and postcolonial studies have now become institutionalized in academia, supported by a diverse and voluminous body of theory. The origins of postcolonial theory are generally traced to the pioneering work of Palestinian-American cultural critic Edward Said. Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is credited with inaugurating colonial discourse with its thesis that a long tradition of European prejudice against the Middle East, Africa, and Asia served as justification for European and American imperialist ambitions in these regions. Said contested dominant theories of representation and argued that Western histories of the Orient were pejorative and based on false

assumptions. The writings of Frantz Fanon, a Martinique-born black intellectual, are also considered central to the development of postcolonial theory, especially for their emphasis on the psychological dynamics of colonial and racist discourse. Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), about the Algerian war of independence against France, was seminal to the African liberation movement of the 1960s. The Indian cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha revolutionized the field of postcolonial studies in the 1990s. His name has become synonymous with a complex theory of identity formation known as "hybridity," which posits that cultural interaction and transformation are processes of infinite negotiation and regeneration occurring in liminal spaces that traditional binary oppositions, such as Self/Other and West/East, cannot accommodate. Another Indian cultural critic, Gayatri Spivak, is frequently cited for her work in rescuing the agency of the subaltern, especially women, from the legacy of imperial oppression. The substantial influence of Bhabha and Spivak helps to explain why the writings of South Asia have acquired a dominant presence in postcolonial studies. The success of Salman Rushdie's Booker Prize-winning novel *Midnight's Children* (1981), the appearance of which coincided with the birth of postcolonial studies, also helped steer postcolonial studies in the direction of India. Postcolonial discourse was slower to take hold in Africa, where post-independence turmoil was met with more aggressive forms of self-definition, but the writings of V. Y. Mudimbe, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Achille Mbembe, from Cameroon, are now gaining recognition for their highly nuanced explorations of the authentic African identity.

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, postcolonial writing and theory have been newly transformed in light of globalization, which has caused a rethinking of such concepts as borders, space, migration, difference, and diaspora, as well as a reformulation of the relationship between national and transnational. Globalization has also prompted a review of cultural contacts as they influence language, leading to concerns that the postcolonial focus on English-language writings is itself a form of imperial domination and cultural capital. There is growing awareness of cultural production in other colonial languages as well as in such indigenous languages as Swahili, Hindi, and Urdu. Though still engaged with concepts derived from postmodern and poststructuralist theory, postcolonial studies has recently seen a movement away from excess abstraction toward a greater focus on real-world geopolitics.

SHORT STORIES

INTERTEXTUAL RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Your responses to the following questions should be at least one solid paragraph (topic sentence, at least six sentences that include details from the story and explanations/elaboration, concluding sentence).

10. In both "The Sniper" and "The Guest," the protagonists' lives are greatly influenced by their countries' political conflict and war. The Republic sniper is actively engaged in war, and Daru is asked to become involved by taking Balducci the prisoner to the authorities. How do the characters differ in their involvement with the wars? In what way are these characters similar when considering the difficulty of choosing a side?

11. We could argue that Kincaid's "Girl" and Marquez's "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" are both interested in the human instinct to exploit. In a sentence or two, how might you explain this link between the texts? How do we know that both authors disapprove of exploitation, which is explicit and obvious in "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" and implicit and a bit quieter in "Girl"?

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