

HL8008 Introduction to Magical Realism

Essay Questions

- **Length:** 750 words
- **Deadline:** Tuesday 15 October

Answer ONE of the following questions:

- 1) ‘A polluting person is always in the wrong. He has developed some wrong condition or simply crossed some line which should not have been crossed and this displacement unleashes danger for someone.’ (Mary Douglas)

Discuss the significance of the abject in *Metamorphosis*.

- 2) ‘He spoke of the chaotic mixing of blood that had gone on since the conquest: Spanish blood with Indian blood, and both of these with blacks of every sort . . . and he asked himself whether such miscegenation had a place in the kingdom of God.’ (Gabriel García Márquez, *Of Love and Other Demons*)

Discuss the significance of hybridity AND/OR syncretism in *Of Love and Other Demons*.

- 3) ‘We live at a time when there are no longer big political (or otherwise) ideals and to be able to focus on small pleasures, I think that’s great.’ (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, director of *Amélie*)

‘Jeunet’s Montmartre is a neighbourhood without socio-economic hardship, without crime, without the racial or religious issues of contemporary France. In his world, the homeless do not even beg on Sundays.’ (Michelle Scatton-Tessier)

In what way does *Amélie* focus on the ‘small pleasures’ of life? Do you regard this as a positive thing or a dangerous form of escapism – a way of avoiding unpleasant realities and abandoning ‘big political ideals’?

- 4) **Discuss the use of magic in any ONE of the following texts: *Metamorphosis*, *Of Love and Other Demons*, *Amélie*. What kind of magic does the author/director employ, and what do you think its thematic significance might be?**

NOTE – You can write only ONE essay on film during the semester, so you must decide whether you would like that essay to be your coursework essay or part of your exam answer.

Plagiarism (the use of another's ideas, data, and/or statements without acknowledgment or with minimal acknowledgment) will result in an F grade. No late papers are permitted without an MC. All papers will be penalized half a letter grade for each day late.