

Gould Essay Prize Questions 2021

1. “‘Character’ occupies a privileged position in the novel or the play: without “character”, passive or active, no text.’ (Hélène Cixous) Do you agree? Answer using examples.
2. ‘Science fiction has the oldest active fandom of any literary genre.’ (Eric Rabkin) Write about the relation of fiction to fandom.
3. ‘But first, I lay claim to the position of narrator in this novel. Yes, me. Rumbustious, irrepressible, adorable me. I have black hair, bronze skin and I would look wonderful in a cream suit with a silk handkerchief. Cigars? Yes. Dark glasses? Yes – except that I do not wish to be mistaken for a gangster. But dark glasses are appropriate. My name translated means ‘one who works in the dark’. You can call me Chico. It’s my brother’s name but so what.’ (Pauline Melville, *The Ventriloquist’s Tale*, 1997).
Discuss ventriloquism in narrative literature.
4. ‘The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes “one’s own” only when the speaker postulates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention.’ (Mikhail Bakhtin)
Write about a piece of literature that has made words that were half someone else’s its own.
5. Is performance interpretation?
6. ‘Or, as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,
And there, all smother’d up, in shade doth sit,
Long after fearing to creep forth again;
So, at his bloody view, her eyes are fled
Into the deep dark cabins of her head.’
(William Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*)
Write about the work of similes in poetry.
7. Discuss the function of loan words, translation, or non-English mother tongues in any piece of literature in English.