

2001 AP ENGLISH LITERATURE SCORING GUIDE
Question #3: "Much madness is divinest Sense—"

General Directions: This scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays that you read, but for cases in which it seems problematic or inapplicable, please consult your table leader. The score you assign should reflect your judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, its style, its mechanics. Reward the writers for what they do well. The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one point above the appropriate one. In no case may a very poorly written essay be scored higher than a three (3).

- 9-8 These well-focused essays identify the "madness" or the "irrational behavior" of a character in an appropriate novel or play, and they persuasively explain the nature of this delusion or eccentric behavior and how it might be judged reasonable in the context of the entire work. Using apt and specific textual illustrations but without belaboring the plot, they fully explore not only the nature of the character's "madness" but also its significance to the work as a whole. These essays need not be flawless, nor must they accomplish all aspects of this complex task equally well. Nonetheless, they exhibit the writer's ability to discuss a literary work with insight and understanding, to sustain control over a thesis, and to write with clarity and perhaps—in the case of a nine (9) essay—with stylistic flair.
- 7-6 These competent essays describe the nature of the character's "madness" in an appropriate novel or play, and they discuss how the delusion or eccentric behavior might be judged reasonable, in addition to the significance that delusion or eccentric behavior has to the work as a whole. Although not without insights, the analysis provided by the 7-6 essays is less thorough, less perceptive, and/or less specific than that of the 9-8 papers; references to the text may not be as apt or as persuasive. Papers scored a seven (7) will demonstrate more sophistication in both substance and style, though both 7's and 6's will be generally well-written and free from significant or sustained misinterpretation.
- 5 These essays tend to be simplistic in analysis even though they may respond to the assigned task and may offer a plausible discussion of the work. They often rely upon plot summary that contains some analysis, implicit or explicit. They may discuss a character's "madness" in a limited manner, or not fully develop its significance to the work as a whole. However, these essays will not accomplish all—or perhaps any—of these tasks with sufficient development. The work itself may be poorly chosen for this essay question; the character's "madness" and its nature may not be clearly related to reasonable behavior. Typically these essays reveal unsophisticated thinking and/or immature writing.
- 4-3 These lower-half essays reflect an incomplete or oversimplified understanding of the work discussed, or they may fail to establish how a character's "madness" can be judged to be reasonable, or they may fail to discuss how that behavior informs the work as a whole. They may rely on plot summary. Their assertions may be unsupported or even irrelevant. Often wordy, elliptical, or repetitious, these essays lack control over the elements of college-level composition. Essays scored a three (3) exhibit more than one of the stylistic errors; they may also be marred by significant misinterpretation and/or poor development.
- 2-1 These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range. Often, they are unacceptably brief. They may be poorly written on several counts and contain distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. The writer's observations are presented with little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence. Essays that are especially inexact, vacuous, and/or mechanically unsound should be scored a one (1).
- 0 This is a response with no more than a reference to the task.
- A blank paper or completely off-topic response.

In J. Conrad's short novel "Heart of Darkness" the character of Kurtz is used to symbolize the dark core that can be found underneath the veneer of civilization.

Although Kurtz was sent to Africa to essentially help the "savages" natives, instead he is consumed by madness and assumes ^{his} savage customs. The degenerative mental state of Kurtz is used by Conrad to reveal the truth concerning human nature. In this manner, Kurtz's "madness" can be interpreted as the ^{genuine} authentic state of mankind that is only hidden by society to preserve order.

Kurtz's actions clearly reveal that from a traditional perspective he can be considered insane. Once a cultured man, he is corrupted by the chaotic state of Africa and becomes consumed by his lust for ivory so much so that he would murder to obtain it. He presents himself as a god to a native African tribe and warns against treachery by decorating the village with the skulls of "rebels." A good illustration of Kurtz's descent into madness is an essay he writes with the intentions of solving the problem of civilizing the native Africans. Although his essay begins eloquently, it deteriorates to the point that by its closure he is calling for the death of all Africans.

Although Kurtz's actions appear irrational, considering the context of Conrad's novel they ~~become~~ can be viewed as reasonable. His ~~the~~ final words before death "The horror, the horror!" reveal ~~at~~ his conclusion that mankind possesses a "heart of Darkness." This at first appears as the ravings of a mad man, but his interpretation ~~is~~ later confirmed

by Conrad who concludes his ~~novels~~ novel with the view that mankind is essentially corrupt. Although the character of Kurtz is chaotic and he is motivated only by his greed for ivory, according to Conrad's interpretation this is the natural state of man. If in fact Kurtz is only acting motivated by his unavoidable "heart of darkness," it becomes impossible to condemn him as insane.

The significance of Kurtz's madness to the novel is that it reveals the various themes present in Heart of Darkness. He stands as a specific example that no man despite his intent or cultured background can prevent his savage nature from bubbling to the surface when separated from society. While in Africa, a land ruled by nature and deficient of societal influences, Kurtz found it impossible not to revert to his own natural state of being. This illustrates the essential theme of Heart of Darkness. Kurtz's main characteristics that were exposed by his madness such as chaos, greed, and irrational behavior, are thought of by Conrad to be the distinguishing aspects of all men.

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Kurtz once a European sent the the heart of the jungle he rides up the river of darkness starts to break free from the rules of society. Kurtz portrayed well by the inhabitants of the area is clearly not a nice person. Kurtz's only incentives are those of finding ivory and in this sense he maybe seen as insane. He is willing to shoot those who approach him and anyone who does not give him all their ivory he kills as many heads ~~hang~~ below his are propped outside his door of those that have defeated him. He even threatened to kill the Russian who was serving him when the Russian was withholding the ivory from him. Truly most would interpret Kurtz to be mad, as we see the doctor in the beginning of the book taking Marlow's skull size to see if the skull size changes assuming that Marlow because he's going into the jungle is going to be automatically made.

Though, what draws ~~to Kurtz~~ to be such an insane character is the fact that he is so much more direct and open about his actions and he has no reason to conceal his actions because he is not limited to standard European law in the jungle and as a result he can be viewed as insane if he is measured to the standard of European laws. Though ~~even though~~ he has broken free from all restrictions of the civil world so as a result ~~to~~ if he is not measured up to the traditional European standards, he is not so insane. Sure, he is able to write to Europe and claim he is in Africa to ~~instill~~ instill morals into the natives ~~now~~ really and the only thing that is his true incentive is that of collecting ivory, but this is not being insane but motivated

without the holding back of rules to hold him back.

One could view the horrors that Kurtz undertakes not as him losing his sanity but rather "loose" moral values. As he is in the heart of the jungle there is no reason for him not to kill and not to steal because ~~no~~ no one is there to stop him. He is not insane but rather he chooses not to be restricted by the ^{European} laws that ~~are~~ ^{no longer} to apply. So because he chooses not to follow the traditional rules, others who adhere to standards of things shall not murder or steal see Kurtz as having gone insane.

The Heart of Darkness is almost a p.4 fall to assume anyone who goes into the jungle is to be mad and this is inevitable when one goes into the jungle because they feel alone. Conrad shows this by showing many instances when the sense darkens and it is ~~no longer as apparent~~ isolates certain characters. Though the isolation may lead to some insanity, it is interesting the characters who meet Kurtz speak so highly of him perhaps it was because Kurtz was not insane but rather had a deeper understanding of the jungle. ~~Otherwise~~ Conrad shows us parts of how one could justify Kurtz's actions by comparing them to ~~parts~~ ^{through} of other characters as well for example the station manager who is just as eager to get ivory and the cannibals, and they are deemed extremely civilized according to Marlow they still hold morals and ~~are~~ the cannibals ~~or~~ especially are drawn to him as he puts a strong connection to them. Further more ~~a~~ white at first glance

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Kurtz may ~~be~~ seem insane when raised to the standards of European laws in the jungle the rules are not so apparent and are only guided by human nature, and the result is one of civility by the standards of the jungle. ~~as civility~~ ~~only~~ sanity only sanity ~~is~~ in accordance to ~~the~~ the freedom of rules in the jungle as in the heart of darkness

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Emily Dickinson wrote, "Much madness is divinest Sense - / to a discerning Eye -" ~~I~~ Madness can both be "eccentric behavior" or "a discerning Eye," or, simply, failure to conform to the norm and the struggle to be different. In James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Stephen's "eccentric behavior" is his own alienation from his peers and, ultimately, from the rest of Ireland. Throughout the book, as the development of the artist is traced, the "eccentric behavior" that Stephen strives to ~~curb~~ ^{curb} the paralyzing forces of the Church, his family, his sexuality, and the whole society of Ireland matures into the "discerning Eye" of his artistic genius.

In his early childhood, Stephen hears an impassioned argument between John Casey and his Aunt Dante, Casey making a case for Parnell and the whole concept of ~~the~~ nationalistic freedom for Ireland and his failure through the betrayal of the Church and Dante, for the righteousness of the Church. After all, "the power of the Church is absolute." Thus, from his very introduction into the world, Stephen must face the constant struggle between the desire for freedom of he-knows-not-what and the paralyzing effects of the Church. This is Stephen's madness, not knowing the purpose or the role he must play in the world.

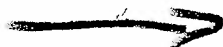
As he is forced to move to Dublin with his family, Stephen must come to terms with his father's



drinking. This is debilitating to Stephen who, at this age, needs a father figure, not a drunkard. Stephen's madness here, again, plays an important role because Stephen is driven by sexual desire and desire for beauty in the world, restricted by the rigid Catholic Church and by the ineptness of his own family. Thus, Ellen's hands ~~become~~ become "a tower of ivory," and the early play-on-words with "belt" and Stephen's contemplation of the poetic nature and the colors of a rose during math class show the conflict between the sexual and the beautiful in his life. Furthermore, we here see the developing "discerning Eye" of Stephen's madness although he does not realize it.

Stephen goes to the red-light district of Dublin. Here is the prime example of his struggle with himself, for as he cries at his first sexual experience, he doubts if this is what he really wants. Throughout the entire book, the ultimate quest for Stephen and for his madness is to discover the essence of his existence. Thus, Stephen begins to ardently pray after the three-day retreat, in which the graphic images of the physical pains of hell and its vast eternity seem to be made especially for him. Feverish, Stephen dreams of all the monsters of hell roaming the place; the vividness of the dream again shows his developing madness.

Yet is this madness truly madness? While Stephen strives to find who he really is, is it not just his personality? His own consciousness of the fact that he is different from others confirm that it actually



might be judged reasonable. Through all the media and the means for Stephen to attain peace with himself, Stephen finds that none of them work. In a seemingly mad search to find the answers for himself, Stephen is only reasonably going through the trial-and-error of life, which is, essentially, what life is.

Ultimately, when asked by the prefect at Belvedere whether he has felt the vocation to become one himself, Stephen begins to doubt his fitness for the job. In fact, he now faces the fact that he has doubted the Catholic Church for long and that all of his praying was just an attempt to belong. No, he needs not to conform. In a key, epiphanic moment in the book, Stephen hears his friends call him, "Dedalus! Dedalus!" (lying beside the river, contemplating his last name, Stephen thinks of the old Daedalus, that soared on wings forwards, the sun finally, Stephen's artistic genius opens its wings and soars; Stephen realizes that his madness was actually reasonable, as he watches the beautiful girl wading in the water.

In the end, Stephen's madness, indeed becomes "the discerning eye" of his artistic genius. It is, in fact, so discerning that Stephen develops his own esthetic theory and of the role of the artist in the world, his own role. It is, essentially, that beauty is perfection in stasis, or static art, as opposed to the kinetic art, or art that moves one physically. This realization liberates Stephen from the paralyzing

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influences of the church, of the family, etc. It affirms it in "I will not serve" (in allusion to the independence of Lucifer - to Carly) and "old artificer, stand me in good stead" (in allusion to the Greek-Daedalus).

In conclusion, in Portrait, one can see that what is considered madness by others is actually the "discerning eye" of the artistic genius; one is not mad if one is different and does not conform one's ~~own~~ purpose in life may be just that, to be different, and, therefore, the madness might be judged reasonable.

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