**Homework Questions for *The Quiet Man***

**Directions**: As usual, these questions are to help guide your reading of the story and will form the basis of class discussion on the film and story. You should answer THREE altogether.

Plus, there’s ONE question about the essay I’m also assigning: “The Subversive St. Patrick's Day Classic: How John Ford fought McCarthyism with *The Quiet Man*,” which I want all of you to answer.

For the rest of the questions on the story and film: CHOOSE TWO to answer in some depth (and answer both parts of each question you choose, if it has two parts). Of course, do your best with grammar and punctuation, but the degree of thoughtfulness and extent of your development are the most important criteria.

You are welcome to discuss these ideas with your classmates and anyone else, but what you turn in should be your own words and ideas. We’ll watch the film first, then you’ll read the story it is based on. I’ll leave it to you whether you read the essay before seeing the film. It doesn’t have too many plot spoilers, and it will free up some time on your weekend if you read it first. Both the essay and the story will be posted on the course website under “Readings.”

**Format, due date:** For all three questions, you should answer in some depth—a well-developed paragraph for each—and have them typed up, printed out, and ready to turn in at the beginning of class on Monday, June 26th.

1. Stereotypes about Americans
2. Sean Thornton (John Wayne’s character) was born in Ireland, but he sees himself both as an exile returning to his homeland *and* as an American by long experience. Discuss how the film’s depiction of Sean reflects stereotypes, whether positive or negative, about Americans (both stereotypes held by Europeans and those we hold about ourselves—that is, what qualities and characteristics we tend to see as definitively “American”). One way to get at this question is to note what Sean says he wants to get away from.
3. In what ways is Shawn Kelvin (of the story by Maurice Walsh) less “American”?
4. Stereotypes about the Irish
5. Discuss how the Irish characters in the film reflect stereotypes about the Irish. Why do you think the film might irritate Irish people?
6. Consider how the Irish are depicted as a group in the original story versus the film. Are the Irish in the story less stereotypically “Irish” than their film counterparts? Be specific in supporting your answer.
7. Story to film
8. Consider all of the changes made to the story as it became a film. Briefly list 3 or 4, then identify which one you’d say was the most significant, and why.
9. Would you say it changed the story’s meaning, or just shifted the emphasis? Discuss.
10. Stereotypes Undermined or reinforced?

Luke Gibbons, who wrote a scholarly book about *The Quiet Man* film, says this about it: “[A]lmost every aspect of the film, from Sean’s arrival at the station to the final curtain call to the audience, is framed in such a way—whether by the camera, the narrative structure, the *mise en scène,* the set design or the script—as to raise questions over what exactly it is we are seeing, and where reality ends and imagination begins.” Gibbons adds, “the depiction of stereotypes, romantic escapism, or nostalgic sentiment is not [in] itself an endorsement of them” (19). What do you think of this? Is the film holding up stereotypes for criticism of stereotyping, or is it endorsing them? How can you tell?

1. Ford’s version of *Taming of the Shrew?*

In his in-depth analysis of the film, James MacKillop points out that by changing the female lead’s name from Ellen (in the story) to Mary Kate, and by adding the scene where she is physically dragged across the countryside, the filmmaker is invoking Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew.* He also says that one could see that scene as an “act” between the two to hoodwink and shame Mary Kate’s brother into giving up her dowry. Does this seem plausible? If so, how does it change the meaning of that scene and of the film as a whole?