

Bodies in Place Fall 2003

Paper 2 (25%)

Assignment: Comparative textual analysis, 1500-1750 words, typed and double-spaced

Due date: 11:00 a.m. outside of lecture on November 18

Topics:

- 1) Consider norms and deviations from norms embedded in two texts. Discuss their representation of the relationship of norms and deviations to location in two of the following texts: *The Pillow Book*, *Richard II*, and *Tristes Tropiques*.
- 2) Consider the performance of sovereignty in two texts. Characterize and compare the relationship between a particular material environment and the impression of authority it creates in two of the following texts: *The Pillow Book*, *Richard II*, and *Tristes Tropiques*.
- 3) Our texts feature individuals with more than one body. For example, *Richard II* has two bodies, his own personal body and the body of the sovereign. Compare the divisions between the individual and the corporate self, how these two are interrelated, and any tensions that may result in two of the following texts: *The Pillow Book*, *Richard II*, and *Tristes Tropiques*.
- 4) Analyze the function of adversarial communication within two of the following texts: *The Pillow Book*, *Richard II*, and *Tristes Tropiques*. Discuss the limitations and enhancements to bodily presence that you identify on the basis of your analysis; and argue for the particular selfhood you find articulated there.
- 5) Analyze the intentional design or manipulation of the "natural" or the "primitive" in two of the following texts: *The Pillow Book*, *Richard II*, and *Tristes Tropiques*. Consider how the particular design features you observe create and help to maintain an environment that supports specific cultural bodies and identities.
- 6) In consultation with your instructor, develop a topic of your own comparing two of the following texts: *The Pillow Book*, *Richard II*, and *Tristes Tropiques*.

Comparative textual analysis works best when...

- A. the essay considers both similarities *and* differences (not just one or the other)
- B. it argues for the *significance* of those similarities rather than simply listing them
- C. that significance unifies the thesis and essay in its culmination of the comparison
- D. that significance itself also organizes the essay according to its argumentative logic that both texts work to support throughout (rather than the separate texts organizing the essay such that the structure works against the essay's work of comparison)

Negative example (violates all of the above): Morrison differs from Marx in genre, understanding of memory and time, and cultural purpose.

- I. Morrison
 1. Novel
 2. rejection of linear time
 3. healing the trauma of slavery
- II. Marx
 1. Manifesto
 2. promotion of linear time
 3. revolution

Positive example (respects all of the above): Morrison's understanding of memory underscores Marx's commitment to linear time and revises revolution to allow for the permanence and power of memory.

- I. Morrison on Marxian memory and temporality
 1. how memory and temporality connect in both texts
 2. how the body in Morrison makes a tree of lines in Marx
- II. Revision of revolution
 1. Morrison revises Marx for memory's permanence
 2. Morrison revises Marx for memory's power

You might notice that in the positive example, one text is developed into a "lens," "reading frame," or analytical question which it uses to reveal something new and subtle about the other text. That's one strategy for unifying a comparison with its significance. Another strategy involves arguing for the texts' cooperative insight on a particular topic (e.g. sovereignty, norms and deviations, etc.).

As in your earlier paper, responses to your chosen prompt should form the basis for original analytical insights which should be presented in an argumentative essay focused on a specific, subtle thesis. A successful thesis will offer an interpretation not obvious upon a first or even second reading of the texts. It may be helpful to imagine the thesis as two-tiered: a fresh insight based on observation of textual detail AND the significance of this insight. Your argument will then present detailed observations based on textual analysis that reveal this insight and its significance. You may relate your observations to the wider (not

wide) aims of the author/text. The most successful papers relate a narrow, detailed insight to a narrow, subtle point. Try to avoid attaching a too general, sweeping meaning to your work.

Your argument must be anchored in the text, **including the use of evidence of close reading when relevant**. Evidence from close reading includes consideration of details - word choice, sentence structure, repetition, tone, setting, characterization, imagery, symbolic meaning - as well as more generalized characteristics of the writing - structure of the plot or parts of it, repetitive image patterns, theme. The more detailed your use of the text, the stronger your argument will be. Use your observations to unpack and develop the distinction you present in your essay.

Guidelines for Essay Format and Documentation

1. Put your name, the name of the course, your instructor's name, and the date on the first page of your paper.
2. Double-space and leave a one-inch margin on all sides.
3. Number all pages except the first.
4. Staple your paper in the upper left corner before you turn it in.
5. Underline or italicize titles of books (except the Bible, whose special status as a holy text is indicated by NOT italicizing its name), plays, magazines, works of art, TV shows, movies, and newspapers; place quotation marks around titles of short stories, poems, songs, and articles in books or magazines.
6. Indent and single-space quotations longer than three full lines; do not use quotation marks. Introduce your quotation in the body of the text. Do not open paragraphs with a quotation. Include shorter quotations or supporting references in the body of the paper.
7. Acknowledge all resource materials, including the primary text(s), **whether quoted directly or indirectly**. The primary text you select to work with (along with lecture and discussion notes) will provide the supporting evidence for your essay. Please do not use other resources such as secondary critical articles or books.

Give references to the text in parentheses after the cited passage.

Example: Aquinas proves God's existence with the "argument from motion" (p. 30).

This simple system of documentation will suffice if you're using an edition that's common to our course; give bibliographic data on a final sheet if you're using some other edition. Remember the general rationale for citing your sources: your reader may want to locate the passage you've referred to in order to read it again, to find out more, to check the context, etc. Make it easy to find your sources.

When you use ideas or opinions from the introductions of our common editions or from lectures or any other source, give a reference. Remember to provide references for direct quotations as well as any paraphrased reference to the text or description of its contents.

Please see syllabus for grading policy.