ENGL 2122

Janssen

**Comparative Analysis**

For this essay, you will need to write a comparative analysis of a central *motif* found in at least 3 primary works of British Literature that we have studied this semester. You may include work used as part of your oral presentation as one of those works. The rest should come from the works we have studied together this semester from Blake to Eliot. In addition, you must use at least 2 secondary sources from your **annotated bibliography (see page 2 below)** in your essay.

Remember that a *motif* is a recurring word, phrase, image, idea, or type in a literary work. Your job will be to trace, analyze, and explicate the motif you choose and in doing so make a case for its relevance and significance in each work that you discuss as well as in the grand scheme of your essay. In other words, you want to get your readers to see the works in a new light, but you also want them to possess a deeper appreciation of the motif itself by the time they have finished your essay.

Keep in mind that it is essential to use specific supporting evidence to illustrate your ideas. Therefore, once you have identified a motif to work with, you will need to comb through the works you will write about for examples. Here is a good rule of thumb. For each specific point you wish to make, you should have at least one piece of specific supporting evidence.

I will show you some sample paragraphs to give you a sense of how this essay should look and sound.

This essay should be 7-10 pages long. It should be double-spaced, using 12-point letter size.

The essay will be due on the last day of class.

A word about editing: 1 point will be deducted from your essay for every 3 word errors. 1 point will be deducted for each of the following grammatical errors: subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, comma splice, fused sentence, sentence fragment, and apostrophe errors. See the handout at the very bottom of my webpage for review of these grammatical rules.

\*Given that we are celebrating the 200th anniversary of *Frankenstein* this semester with a viewing of *Young Frankenstein* on October 31 at 6pm in the Student Center Auditorium, you may use that film as one of your primary sources for this assignment. If you choose that option, we will need to discuss the challenges and nuts and bolts issues related to writing about film, but we can make it work if you want to go that route with your paper.

**Annotated Bibliography**

For this assignment, you will need to compile a group of 5 secondary sources from the Norton Critical Editions we have read this semester. An annotation is a synopsis or summary. Your annotations should not be more than ½ of a page in length, so this should amount to a 3-page project. Sources must come from the “Contexts” and “Criticism” sections of our Norton editions. In doing the work of annotating, your goals are clarity, accuracy, and objectivity. You will need to include at least 2 of these sources in your motif essay, although you are not required to use either novel as one of your primary sources for the essay. Here is an example of an annotation:

Wofford, Susanne L. “A Critical History of *Hamlet*.” *Hamlet*. Ed. Susanne L. Wofford.

New York: Bedford / St. Martin’s, 1994. 181-207.

Wofford surveys the critical attention *Hamlet* has received beginning with

Shakespeare’s cultural status during his own time. Wofford’s main focus, however, lies in the critical attention given to *Hamlet* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In particular, she focuses on the Romantic Hamlet of the nineteenth century, as developed by writers such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge. She also emphasizes the importance of both A.C. Bradley’s and Sigmund Freud’s interpretations of Shakespeare’s most famous character, especially focusing on Freud’s use of the play in developing his theory of the Oedipus complex. She also touches on other important readers of the play in the twentieth century, such as T.S Eliot, G. Wilson Knight, and John Dover Wilson. She concludes by pointing toward some present-day developments in the study of the play and asserts that “*Hamlet* will continue to puzzle and possess the minds of future generations, who can make the play their own only by in turn taking critical possession of it” (205). With its summary of the high points in *Hamlet* criticism, this essay is a useful starting point for those beginning research on the play.