

Section I Essay (20%): the Symbolic Self

What: This assignment requires you to consider a variety of ideas related to Dualism (the Self as body/mind) and/or Structuralism (reality structured as surface (or sensory) forms / underlying Truth), and to write an academic research paper on a topic related to our class discussions in Section I.

Why: Giving thought to, doing research on, and writing about complicated ideas teaches you:

1. To consider “big-picture” arguments that affect our daily lives
2. To consider ways in which our concept of Self is connected to the history of ideas and to modern society
3. To think critically about ideologies, their merits and flaws, and their broad reaching implications for real people every day
4. To further develop your critical skills as a reader and writer
5. To incorporate research into a well-reasoned and well-written academic argument

How: This assignment allows for a wide variety of responses. Your essay must address a topic related to the notion that we, and our world, are dualistic (mind/body or symbol/Truth). It does not need to be philosophical. You may write about any of the applications of Dualism that we discussed in class (myth, symbolism, allusion, archetype, or monomyth). Regardless of the approach you choose, you must include scholarly support and/or research. See below for suggestions/examples.

A few topic ideas/examples:

1. An “idea” based approach: examine dualism as an idea. What sort of consequences are there for seeing the world as being made of a surface/sensory form that conceals/reveals an underlying Truth? Or, if our mind/soul is our *true/real* Self, what implications does this have for race, social class, crime, or other modern social issues?
2. A literary (or artistic) approach: examine a work of art (art, film, music, literature, or other creative work) using one of the related frameworks we have discussed (symbolism, allusion, or archetype).
 - a) For example, Batman is usually portrayed as somewhat vigilante in his approach to crime fighting. He’s always-almost crossing the line between heroic and not-so-heroic. How are (actual) shadows and the concept of the Shadow (Jung’s archetype) used by the writers of Batman (or any other vigilante-hero) to show that constant threat of crossing the good guy – bad guy line?
 - b) Or, as another example, what’s the significance of the masked hero? Why is their mask so important? (Be sure to tie your discussion to dualism in some way).

- c) Or, how does a particular artist (Kanye, Banksy, or other) use symbolism, allusion, or archetype in their work?
3. Analyze and expand on a concept we discussed in this section. For example, you might be interested in the archetype of the shadow and want to explore it in much more detail (with examples). Or, how does a particular artist/film maker use the archetype of light/dark (as archetypes of good/evil and, literally, as light/dark areas)?
 4. Use Campbell's monomyth model to interpret a myth, story, or movie. (Star Wars, Harry Potter, Hunger Games, Shrek, the Matrix, the Lion King, and the Lord of the Rings are off the table as topics. They've been done to death).

These are just examples. You are free to run other topics past me if you have other ideas and/or are concerned.

Any work discussed at length in class is off the table as a possible topic. This assignment is not a book report; it is an argumentative, analytical, and/or persuasive academic essay.

Requirements: For this assignment you are required to complete a 4-5 page argumentative/persuasive research paper, including scholarly resources properly cited in your paper and in correct MLA format (essay, citations, and works cited). Your essay must have an appropriate topic, scholarly sources, and be properly cited with a works cited page.

Failure to include citations and a Works Cited page will result in a significant grade penalty for this assignment.

If you are analyzing a specific work (story, poem, song, painting, picture, or film), you should include it as one of your sources.

When:

Tuesday, February 20th

Essay due by start of class