

Closing Writing

Exploring Cultural Representation in Film

Choose a children's film rooted in exploration of cultural experience. Sign up in e-learning (google docs) so no film is repeated. Then, compose an essay in which you use at least one critical article or theorist to interpret representation of race, ethnicity, or culture, with particular consideration of ideology, stereotypes and power structures.



The purpose of this essay is to see how considerations from the semester have resulted in developing interpretative abilities related to children's literature. Strong essays will:

- Critique and evaluate a children's film, including a specific discussion of visual elements and consider how various elements related to cultural representation contribute to an overall textual message.
- Engage theory/criticism by articulating how the thesis of the secondary text fits or changes when applied to the retelling.
- Argue a key point about the film, using details to focus on one specific aspect worthy of particular note (rather than summarizing the entire visual text).
- Focus on visual elements (not simply plot, characterization, theme) and ideology. Explore how messages, social constructs, and power dynamics are represented in the film.

It is my hope that, after writing two previous analytical assignments and discussing children's texts throughout the semester, students will have developed in their analytical skills, and thus, I'll use my feedback from the opening writing to consider the essay in terms of its analytical progress. As before, graduate and undergraduate students have differing expectations for the level of their analytical writing. While strong essays all share some key approaches (see "tips and resources" for some suggestions), graduate students will be able to engage more fully with theory and criticism, while undergraduate students might focus more identifying textual messages and stereotypes, with critical sources used in a supporting role.

Requirements

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| Length | Undergraduate essays should be 2-4 double spaced pages. Graduate students are encouraged to write 4-6 pages. |
| Source | Meaningfully engage with at least one critical article, cited using MLA. This can be a source of your choosing, or you may use any of the critical readings from the semester. |
| Primary Text | Films appropriate to this assignment can focus on cultural experience, feature minority and/or nonwhite characters, or consider ideas related to race or ethnicity. Films can be watched on streaming services or via Amazon.com for a nominal fee or rented from the Kalamazoo Public Library |

If you have any questions about analytical writing techniques or would like me to look at an early draft, please don't hesitate to ask. Drafts must be submitted 48 hours before the due date.