

Essay #1 Assignment Sheet

Due Date:

- **Friday , Sept 25th at 9am:** Send your essay as an attachment via e-mail to jcmeloni@gmail.com or julie_meloni@wsu.edu
 - If you use Google Docs, you can just “share” the paper with me instead of sending an attachment.

Instructions:

This paper should be proof positive of your engagement with the texts we have read through Week 5. You have two choices, as you will see below, of general directions that you can take with this essay. However, within those two choices there are innumerable arguments you can make and examples you can use to support those arguments.

Some general comments regardless of the direction you take:

- **You absolutely must have a thesis.** This is not a *report*; it's an *analysis supporting an original argument*.
- Support support support support support support the claims that you make. Avoid fallacies.
- Cite your sources appropriately using MLA format for in-text parenthetical citation and a works cited page.
- Everything we've read or discussed in class is a valid source, especially the definitions from the packet we discussed on Day #2 . In fact, I can't imagine not quoting from the excerpts from *New Keywords*.
- The minimum length of your essay should be 1000-1200 words. There is no maximum—as long as you're writing good stuff and not filler, write as much as you want.
 - If you find yourself writing at the minimum number of words, be sure that you are writing a very specific, focused, and concise essay rather than one that makes lots of general statements or otherwise appears nonspecific and unfocused.
 - You *can* write a perfectly good short essay, as long as it is focused. You could also write a long essay that's *not* good because it is unfocused and lacks depth.

Paths to Greatness:

Following are two directions you can choose from when writing your essay. If there's something you are dying to write about but it doesn't fit these two general paths, e-mail me and pitch your idea.

1. In general, “systems of exchange” refers to how people get what they need and want. In *Heart of Darkness* and *Things Fall Apart* (and in fact all of life) every person or group wants something from someone else, not everyone gets what they want, negotiations sometimes take place, and sometimes there are no negotiations. Taking this very broad idea and looking at the texts themselves, discuss instances from both texts in which an exchange takes place. Describe the parties involved, the exchange itself, and the immediate and long-term outcome of the exchange. From these descriptions, and the knowledge you gained by reading all of the secondary material assigned with the texts, make some sort of claim as to why the exchange occurred. Your claim could be based in history and culture, or in literature and narrative structure. The idea is to hypothesize, support, and logically conclude something about an exchange between parties in the texts you've read.

OR

2. We've seen instances of the colonial, postcolonial, and “the other” throughout *Heart of Darkness* and *Things Fall Apart*. In fact, these concepts still run rampant through culture today—especially in film. Select a film with which you are familiar, and summarize some examples of colonial/postcolonial issues and considerations of “the other” (these range from *Apocalypse Now* to *Twilight* and *Harry Potter*, to *District 9* and beyond—ask me if you're unsure). Then, and most importantly, show similar instances from both *Heart of Darkness* and *Things Fall Apart*. With this topic, you will talk more about the concepts and the scenes in the film you chose than the texts, but devote at least a paragraph each to the texts as you use them as a touchstone on the way to making your argument. Your argument should be something more than just “hey look! It's the same in books and movies.”