

Paradise Imagery and Culture Interpretation

Length: 1500 words (MINIMUM)

Format: MLA (see example in *SMG* or *Nuts and Bolts*)

Due Dates: on final revision of course calendar

Purpose: To complete an analysis of the relationship between an image or pattern of images and the cultural themes of the Toni Morrison novel *Paradise*. Your interpretation should also demonstrate that you have read and thought carefully about the entire text and can connect your reading to any appropriate semiotic or cultural concepts from *Signs of Life*.

Evaluation Criteria

- A clear **thesis** stated at the beginning of the paper stakes out an interpretive position requiring a defense and explanation (this thesis must be analytical and not just descriptive).
- **Focused and detailed body paragraphs** have the following qualities: 1) a clear transitional link to the thesis or previous paragraph, 2) a focus on one image or connected pair or set of images articulated in a topic sentence and developed in detail, and 3) a logical organization within the paragraph.
- **Compelling evidence** Short quotes from the text integrated into interpretive sentences will help you stay focused on proving your argument and avoiding summary and extended description. Remember, your readers have read the book. You do not need to summarize what happens. Move directly toward identifying and interpreting the text but do not summarize the text or provide unnecessary generalizations or hyperbole. A brief conclusion enlarges and develops your thesis (Maasik and Solomon 123) but does not merely repeat it.
- Understanding of **the imagery and cultural ideas, myths, and themes explored by the text and discussed in class:** Your essay should demonstrate your understanding of the imagery and cultural issues presented in the text. You may apply semiotic and cultural contexts from SOL but you are not obligated to do so. If you do use any outside materials you will need to document properly in MLA style (you do not, however, need a works cited list if you refer only to SOL).
- **Style and Mechanics:** The essay uses active voice verbs—especially in thesis and topic sentences—employs concise diction, and demonstrates mastery of a variety of sentence forms and lengths. The essay also demonstrates mechanical correctness in areas such as spelling, grammar, punctuation, diction, etc. In this composition course, I will carefully grade style, grammar and usage, and I will not award a passing grade to a student unless that student demonstrates competency in these areas.