Documented Essay: Worldview Analysis

This will be a Documented Literary Analysis of 3-4 pages. This paper DOES require outside research. You must cite your original subject and at least TWO outside critical sources. These sources must come from scholarly databases, and the articles must be from peer-reviewed journals or texts; additional non-scholarly sources are permitted, but not required. Therefore, you will have a primary source and at least two secondary sources, but you may have more if desired.

Objective: Analyze a current magazine article, current newspaper article, or popular secular song’s lyrics to expose its underlying worldview or specific philosophy. Film is also permitted if a printed script is available to quote from.

Execution: Select a text that seems to have a discernible worldview or philosophy. Read it closely and accurately to pick up on any values, weighty ideas, or ideological agendas. You might not be able to give its worldview or philosophy a name (perhaps you will), but at least explain what it resembles, or simply explain it as a hybrid, perhaps, of two or more orientations.

Note: Choose texts with identifiable biases. Avoid objective news reports in which biases, hence worldviews, are less readily apparent. Avoid selecting an ostensibly (very apparently) Christian medium; look for media OUTSIDE contemporary American popular Christianity. Analysis of such a medium must go beyond the simplistic. The analysis needs to be objective—explaining only what the worldview of the text seems to be and supporting your analysis with quotations from the text. Your secondary sources will provide documentation of the worldview presented.

Guidelines:

Write an introductory paragraph that includes these elements: prevalence of worldviews or philosophical orientations in popular media, an introduction (by name) of your selected medium, and perhaps some background on its creator. Finish with a thesis statement that clearly shows your findings about a particular worldview that appears in your selected medium.

Write one paragraph of summary of the medium. Follow the guidelines of summary writing: rigid objectivity, use of present-tense verbs, repeated mention of author’s name, accurate rendering of author or artist’s ideas. Finish this paragraph with one MLA-style parenthetical citation that covers the entire work.

The body of the essay will focus on specific evidence of the worldview. You can use the questions in the James Sire handout to give you some vocabulary for considering the worldview of the author. Answer as many questions as possible about your subject. The organizational
pattern is up to you, but it must make sense and must be ordered. I suggest a structure of one paragraph per piece of evidence, but this might be too confining for some works. Just make sure that you provide at least four parenthetically cited bits of evidence from your selected work. You must also have at least two parenthetically cited outside critical sources (a critical review, a reference source, etc.) Use your secondary sources to support your own assertion or perhaps to present opposing or differing views. You should have a minimum of three body paragraphs, documented correctly, using both parenthetical citations and a Works Cited page, all in proper MLA format.

Finish with a concluding paragraph that includes the typical generalities and a reference to your original thesis. This would be the place to include your own opinions of and responses to the worldview, without using 1st person voice, of course.

This essay should be submitted in the D2L dropbox upon completion. The essay is worth 200 points.

Examples:

Thesis: Without specifically advocating any brand of theism, Gregory Fairchild’s film Revolving Door implies, through its plot and characters, that moral absolutes do exist, that people are accountable for their actions, and that there is Someone or Something beyond this temporal world to which all people must eventually submit.

Body paragraph beginning:

One piece of evidence of Fairchild’s vague but evident worldview is the events that befall the protagonist, Jim Eberly. Eberly, a manager at a plumbing supply store, somehow ends up facing ethical dilemmas daily, even hourly. These dilemmas range from comical to darkly threatening, at one point even cause him to fear for his life. For example, when Eberly makes a mistake on his expense ledger, he considers covering up the error. However, the film flashes back to earlier in that morning when his son asks if it is ever permissible to deceive someone (Revolving Door). Viewers should not underestimate the importance of this scene, because it….

One last reminder: This should be a formal, scholarly document, avoiding first-person words, informal language and tone, and all manner of incorrect structure and grammar. Use present tense when referring to source material.

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