

Transatlantic Novel: Paper #1: Visual Culture and the Novel
Due Friday 9 October IN CLASS AT THE START OF CLASS

This paper is NOT a standard paper that you've likely written for other courses. I'm hoping that you'll find this variation to be interesting and engaging. Here are the steps you should take as you develop this paper:

1. **Identify 3 images** – note, these would be largely historical images – that you think provide insight into one (or more) of the novels we've read so far. One way to approach this might be to think of what might make a good cover image for the book, or what illustrations would you like to see. I recommend that you check with me about your images to make sure you're on the right track. Checking with me is not required; however, you will have better peace of mind knowing that you are on the right track with this. E-mail me at any time with a link to your image, and I will get back to you as soon as possible. It would be wise to e-mail me with at least one of your images at least one week in advance so that you know you are in the ballpark, or if you need to go back to the drawing board.

I will have a list of useful websites on the course webpage, that should provide you with some jumping off points for finding images. Google image searches may be helpful, but you might also try some archives and collections that are focused on our various themes, novels, authors, etc. An image totally removed from its context will not be helpful. If you don't know when or where your image was made, you won't be able to write a strong paper. I recommend that you find an image from a site that tells you at least a bare minimum of information about the image – an online archive, educational site, museum etc. – in a reliable fashion.

2. You **must** e-mail me a list of links to your images by 5pm on Thursday, October 8th, so that I can prepare for class discussion. This is **not** an e-mail requesting approval for your images; this is just a list of links so that I can share the links in class on Friday. You are welcome (and encouraged) to send your links earlier than this.

3. Write a paper discussing the three images you've selected. I'm including, below, more information on exactly what you should include in your paper, but note: you should be writing a PAPER, not just answering a series of questions. You should have an introduction and a conclusion, and point about your images. You **do not** need to print color (or B&W) reproductions of the images, although you may if you wish to do so (or if it helps you). I can and will refer to the online versions. You should aim for an absolute minimum of 4 pages and a maximum of 8. Those pages should be double-spaced, in a normal (12-point) font. That page count does NOT include images or a list of works cited.

4. On the day the paper is due, you must have your paper in class, and you must be prepared to share your paper and discuss your images in class. I will bring up the images on the projector, and we will have a chance to discuss the significance of the images and how they help us understand (and expand our understanding of) the novels and the course topic.

You will be choosing three different images that you think provide us with some insight, information, context, or connection with texts we've read in class. You could choose three images related to one text; you could choose three images related to three different texts, or you could choose three images where each one is related to one or more of our course texts.

Below you will find a listing of all the information I would like to see in your final report. You should NOT reproduce these headings; your paper should read like an essay, not a list of answers to questions. You do not have to present these items in the order they appear here; however, all of the items listed below MUST appear in your paper somewhere. You should organize your paper in a way that makes sense to you and for your specific document. Your responses should be developed paragraphs, written in formal prose. You may (and should!) use "I," particularly when you're talking about how you found the document.

1. **Provide basic identifying information about the image:** Title of the image (or if no title, a brief identifying title); date of the image; type of image (photograph, drawing, painting, map etc.); source of the image (name of site or archive where you found it).
2. **Describe and discuss the image:** Provide a description/summary of the image. This includes a description/discussion of colors, forms, relative size, and any other observable details. You might also address questions about the kind of image and its reproduction. For instance, was there damage to the image (the original or the reproduction)? Is it realistic and documentary, or imagined and fantastic? If there is text within the image, you would definitely note that, and you might quote some of it. Be detailed and specific in your observations – this could take a couple of paragraphs, depending on the image.
3. **Image Significance/Value:** Discuss why you think this image is significant, interesting, important, useful, curious or otherwise valuable. Some questions that might help with this (note: you do not have to necessarily answer all of these): Why did you choose it? What does it help us understand about this novel, this period, this time, or this place? How does it expand or even change your perspective on the history of this time period? You might think of this as a place to make a case for this document to be included in our study for the class. You could also include questions that this image raises for you (whether about the time period, the image itself, or the text you're connecting it with).
4. **Image's Connection to the Course:** You should make connections with some of the themes we've studied in class, and with specific readings assignments from the course. *For each of your three images, you should have at least one specific quote (properly cited) from one of our course texts.* (That's a total of 3 quotes – they could be all from one text or from three different texts). This is where you explain how the image is related to a text in the course, and how it can help us understand the text in some way. This section may go on for a few paragraphs, depending on how many connections you see with the course readings.

Don't forget that you need an **introduction and conclusion**. For these parts, think about how these images or these texts are related. For instance, did you choose three images about slavery? Or perhaps three images of different places depicted in one of our texts? Or three portraits of authors of our texts? Why/how are the images connected to each other? How do these three images work together (or perhaps against each other) in helping us understand the course material?