

Essay #2: topics and dates

On Voltaire's *Candide*

Begin with a larger question about the novel which engages you, and which doesn't have an immediately obvious answer. Pose the question in reference to a specified passage, to give the reader an example of why you have this question. Then find about three other substantive passages or moments to examine. Discuss them with your question in mind, but also see what else you can find to notice, whether it appears to bear on the question or not: for instance, in writing about a thematic question like Voltaire's views on women, you might also notice something interesting about his style. Use, refine, and develop insights from your journals where they fit. In concluding, describe any further insights you've gotten on the original question, and what remains unanswered. You should view this essay as an experiment (the original meaning of the literary form "essay," "essai" in French, was "trial"): your aim is not to produce necessarily a particular answer, but to describe exactly and clearly the results of your inquiry.

On Voltaire, Blake, Williams

What kinds of places, persons, or activities are represented as ideal in these works by Voltaire, Blake, and Williams? How do their representations of the ideal diverge from each other? What strikes you as important about the *manner* of their representations? Choose a couple of specific examples to look at; use the questions to direct an analysis of these examples. You need not cover all three writers, and should not unless the paper is longer (~6 pp.) and you write concisely.

On Blake

Choose two or three poems from *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience*; what counts as innocence and what counts as experience for Blake? Make sure you look at the images as well as the text. How do innocence and experience, text and image, reflect on each other? (NB: the "compare" button in the archive of Blake images lets you see all the different ways he colored the plates). Can you imagine how a poem from a third, resolving group might look? Where does this work connect to other readings, earlier questions? I'm not looking for global answers - again, these are thinking questions.

Dates:

Draft due to me, Class #13; schedule an appointment to discuss the draft with the course tutor this week. Revision due to me, in Class #16.