

Choose one of the following and write a short essay (3 – 4 pages / 800-1000 words, double spaced). The following are broad-based topics and you are encouraged to narrow your interpretation in any way that you see fit.

The website has a link to “Guidelines on creating a good thesis”:

<https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/ThesisDefinitionStrategyFEB2024.pdf>

Please remember to give your essay a title; to provide a footnote to any secondary sources that directly influence your essay; and, to include your name and student ID # on the essay. Please email me your essay as a Word file or a PDF. Thank you!

- A: Read Susan Faludi’s article “America’s Guardian Myths” (*New York Times*, 7 September 2007—linked off of the website for Week 5; [https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/eng113\\_kj\\_faludi\\_rowlandson.pdf](https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/eng113_kj_faludi_rowlandson.pdf))

In the article, Faludi writes: “Rowlandson’s story holds a key to our own experience, shedding light on not only the trauma of the day [11 September 2001] itself but our response.” Do you agree with the way Faludi draws parallels between Rowlandson’s experience and 9/11? Why or why not. You might pay particular attention to the way she uses the phrase “war on terror.”

- B: First, read and analyze Sherman Alexie’s poem “Captivity” (linked off of the website for Week 5). Second, develop an essay that interprets Alexie’s poem “Captivity” in relation to a metaphor in Rowlandson’s captivity narrative. ([https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/eng155\\_kj\\_alexie\\_captivity.pdf](https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/eng155_kj_alexie_captivity.pdf))

- C. In the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, he gives an account of making a treaty with the Indians at Carlisle as a diplomat representing the Pennsylvania Commissioners and the House Assembly (the colonial government of Pennsylvania). Franklin writes:

The year following, a treaty being to be held with the Indians at Carlisle, the governor sent a message to the House, proposing that they should nominate some of their members, to be joined with some members of council, as commissioners for that purpose. The House named the speaker (Mr. Norris) and myself; and, being commissioned, we went to Carlisle, and met the Indians accordingly.

As those people are extremely apt to get drunk, and, when so, are very quarrelsome and disorderly, we strictly forbade the selling any liquor to them; and when they complained of this restriction, we told them that if they would continue sober during the treaty, we would give them plenty of rum when business was over. They promised this, and they kept their promise, because they could get no liquor; and the treaty was conducted very orderly, and concluded to mutual satisfaction. They then claimed and received the rum; this was in the afternoon: they were near one hundred men, women, and children, and were lodged in temporary cabins, built in the form of a square, just without the town. In the evening, hearing a great noise

among them, the commissioners walked out to see what was the matter. We found they had made a great bonfire in the middle of the square; they were all drunk, men and women, quarreling and fighting. Their dark-colored bodies, half naked, seen only by the gloomy light of the bonfire, running after and beating one another with firebrands, accompanied by their horrid yellings, formed a scene the most resembling our ideas of hell that could well be imagined; there was no appeasing the tumult, and we retired to our lodging. At midnight a number of them came thundering at our door, demanding more rum, of which we took no notice.

The next day, sensible they had misbehaved in giving us that disturbance, they sent three of their old counselors to make their apology. The orator acknowledged the fault, but laid it upon the rum; and then endeavored to excuse the rum by saying: *"The Great Spirit, who made all things, made everything for some use, and whatever use he designed anything for, that use it should always be Put to. Now, when he made rum, he said, 'Let this be for the Indians to get drunk with,' and it must be so."* And, indeed, if it be the design of Providence to extirpate these savages in order to make room for cultivators of the earth, it seems not improbable that rum may be the appointed means. It has already annihilated all the tribes who formerly inhabited the sea-coast. (Penguin 121-122; 1818 edition, pp. 127-128; PDF 161-162)

**Compare this version from his autobiography with the treaty proceedings that Franklin published. What key differences do you notice -- and what do these difference mean-- in regard to Franklin's representation of the treaty process?**

(The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, Vol. 5, p. 95-107; this is a PDF file available on the course website under Week 6:

<https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/FranklinTreatyCarlisle.pdf>)

- D: Consider the two illustrations (the two "plans" or maps) for John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* linked from the icon under Week 2.**

<https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/bunyanPP.html>

**Compare and contrast the way these images depict the journey of Christian from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. How do these "plans" suggest differences in a key concept of Puritan faith as we have discussed it this semester? In answering this question, you might focus on a specific site on the two maps, the general layout of the journey, or any specific feature (or features) that you deem especially important.**

- E: Consider the Chinese translation of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* Chinese as 天路歷程 (Hong Kong, 1856) by William Chalmers Burns (1815-1868), a missionary from Scotland affiliated with the English Presbyterian Church.**

**In your essay, consider how Burns has translated Bunyan's work by focusing on a key phrase and / or an illustration. Your essay can evaluate the translation, explaining why it is a good translation, a bad translation, or a mix of good and bad. Remember, in choosing a passage (or phrase) you are already setting the conceptual foundation for comparison, so please tell your reader why you have chosen it.**

As you evaluate the translation, you will need to explain how it relates to principles of Christian faith, and/or the use of metaphors (symbols, allegory), and/or historical contexts of readership.

You can find Burns's translation and relevant links through the small icon on the right side of the page for Week 3; or follow these links:

<https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/bunyanPP.html>

<https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/TianLuLiCheng1856.pdf>

Also, here is a link to Harvard-Yenching Library that holds this translation and other subsequent Chinese translations of *The Pilgrim's Progress*:

<https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/chinese-rare-books/catalog/49-990081478090203941>

- F:** Consider how *The Anti-Slavery Alphabet* (Philadelphia, 1847) is different from *The New England Primer* (1600s). Both are books that teach someone how to read—but they do so in different ways. How does the *Anti-Slavery Alphabet* borrow and adapt features from *The New England Primer*? Why do you think the *Anti-Slavery Alphabet* made these changes and how would you evaluate its effectiveness?

Another way of approaching this topic is to consider how the *Anti-Slavery Alphabet* borrows stylistic features of the *New England Primer* but assumes a very different understanding of Christianity—your essay might consider this difference through comparison and contrast of specific references to the primers.

The *Anti-Slavery Alphabet* is available on the course website under Week 8:

<https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/ANTISLAVERYALPHABET1847philadelphia.pdf>

The *New England Primer* is available on the course website under Week 2:

[https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/ENGL58\\_KJ\\_Primer.pdf](https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/ENGL58_KJ_Primer.pdf)

<https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/NewEnglandPrimerFORD1897.pdf>

- G:** The first paragraph of Chapter Three of Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of a Life of an American Slave* (1845) describes a garden with its perimeter marked by tar. In your essay, propose an allegorical reading of this paragraph—one that highlights at least one key metaphor. Be sure to explain to your reader the significance of Douglass's allegory—what is the central message he is trying to convey, why is this message important, and why does he use allegory to convey the message?
- H:** Write an essay in which analyze a poem by Anne Bradstreet for the metaphors that it uses to represent the death of a "Grand-child." Tie in ideas of Puritan faith as you explain how the metaphor (or metaphors) creates a sense of meaning (or ambiguity) in regard the death of this child. You can find the poems linked from the small icon on the right side of the page for Week 5; or follow this link:
- <https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/bradstreet.html>