

## Discussion Post/Reader Response #5 Creative & Critical

For your fifth discussion post/reader response, you will be choosing an idea, concept, or argument presented in any of our readings, and you will put yourself in conversation with it. I want you to select an aspect of a text that truly made an impression on you, an idea that stuck with you, and I want to watch you consider it, with care and complexity, on the page. This response will provide the basis for your final paper, which will blend literary analysis with personal, creative narration. You can think of this assignment as a mini draft for your final paper. Thus, ***it is absolutely crucial that you have a genuine interest in the topic you're discussing***. If you're bored by your own topic, then writing a whole paper about it will be torturous, for both you, the writer, and me, the reader.

### **What to do:**

**First**, look at the syllabus and consider all the texts we have read so far. Which ones stick out in your mind? Which ones were you interested to discuss in class? Which ones would you want to have a conversation about?

You don't necessarily need to have loved or totally understood the whole text—for example, you may have found *The Glass Essay* a bit confusing or hard to crack into, but you might very well be interested in the ideas Anne Carson has about heartbreak, about solitude, about the splintering of identity. In this response, it's the ideas that will spark your inquiry.

**Next**, consider what aspect of the text you found interesting, and think about why you responded to it. Did you agree? Disagree? Did it remind you of another related idea? Did it make you consider something in a different light?

**Then**, I want you to craft an argument based on your response to the text. This argument will present an idea that the text explores, and will then consider your own response to those ideas. It might look something like this:

In [TEXT,] the author explores the idea that \_\_\_\_\_. I find this idea interesting because \_\_\_\_\_, and I'd like to consider it further.

You are absolutely encouraged to use your personal experience or observations to ground your argument. The use of "I" is totally acceptable here. After all, this is an idea that genuinely sparked your interest, which means it probably resonated with something in your experience.

I do not expect you to perform close readings of the text, as I have asked you do in other papers. This doesn't mean I don't want you analyzing them, but you don't need to be digging into the language. However, I would like you to ***cite your source text at least twice***. You don't need to analyze its language, but I want you to respond to what it says. Again, imagine you are having a conversation with it. Pick out some specific things you'd like to point to. Some things to consider:

- **Make sure you are discussing your source text.** This response is, of course, about your ideas. However, it's your ideas *in conversation* with someone else's. I want you to make sure you are identifying ideas in the source text, and responding to them on the page.
- **Make sure you are responding to the text with an argument of your own.** It doesn't necessarily have to be "argumentative"—it's not a debate—but I want you to be making some sort of claim about the idea/topic. Basically, you are presenting an idea in response to an idea. Make sure your response has some direction.
- **Make sure you aren't simply "relating" to the text.** For example, if you were interested in the Glass Essay because she goes through a breakup, and you also have recently been through a breakup, that's a great start. But make sure your response says more than "I relate to this." Ask yourself why you relate to it? What ideas of your own do you have?
- **Make sure you are saying something interesting.** This isn't to say that you have to say something crazy, inflammatory, or totally out of left field. However, you all come to this with a unique perspective—show me that perspective! Aim for complexity and nuance. As with the rest of your papers, try not to say something that everyone would agree with, or that everyone would think of.
- **Avoid cliché.** It's boring to read things we've read before. Cliches are clichés for a reason—they convey essential truths. But what makes us listen to a million love songs about the same topic, or read a bunch of poems that are all about loss, is the way they presented familiar themes.
- **Take risks!** I am assigning this response so that you and I can both break out of the stiff, stodgy confines of an academic paper. To be sure, it's important to learn those conventions so you can learn how to craft an argument. That's why I focus so much on it for much of the semester. But at this point, we've been doing those for a while. You know how to write a standard essay, you know topic sentences and transitions and MLA format. You know the box inside and out. Now, I want to see you step outside of it. From the Dinner Party Reading Response, I know you are all capable of making vivid, unique, and creative choices in your writing. Don't be afraid to be creative in this response. In other words, while I don't want you to take this as an excuse to write sloppily or overly casually, do not feel like you have to write in "paper speak."

Other Requirements:

- 400 – 500 words
- MLA Format (Times New Roman, Heading, etc.)
- Must have title that reflects the content of the response

**This assignment is out of 5 points**

**DUE: Friday, November 24, 2017 at 11:59 pm on Icon to the drop box labeled "Creative & Critical"**