

ANALYTICAL ESSAY

Overview

Previously we focused on composing a descriptive, idea-driven narrative that would be compelling to a general audience interested in insightful expression of personal experiences with education. This essay will focus on analysis, specifically the development of critical commentary on an artwork, providing a well-reasoned interpretation for a popular audience interested in literary art. We will develop this essay over four weeks across three drafts.

Rhetorical Situation / Prompt

In this essay you will write an essay to a popular audience of a literary magazine. This audience is looking for *insightful readings of literature that identify something significant for further reflection*. The goal will be to provide a creative, textually grounded interpretation of the poem(s) and develop a short commentary on its significance, what it inspires, provokes, etc.

It may be helpful to imagine this as a literary/arts review piece for an educated popular audience written for the purposes of creating intellectual (not commercial) interest in the selected work, its meaning and cultural significance. In these types of pieces the author provides a compelling interpretation that develops a viewpoint on the work and then talks about its significance in some larger context - society, everyday life, human feeling, understanding of a subject or cultural issue, etc.

Preparation

In order to write this essay you will need to:

1. Identify a poem or music video (Moore, Stevens, Hughes, Gambino, Knife) that you want to analyze and interpret
2. Develop a first "reading" of the artwork: what do you understand as one of its purposes? What is it trying to communicate? How does it create meaning, thought, and feeling?
3. Think about why your reading or the poem is relevant. What does the artwork offer up to thought? Given your reading, does it open up an issue? Subvert a commonplace? Create a new image of its subject matter? Generate an odd or interesting feeling? Comment on history?

These will help you create your discovery draft in which will focus on building a core of close analysis (#2) and searching for an angle to take (an idea from #3) to orient the later drafts.

Process

The draft schedule due dates for this essay is as follows:

Discovery Draft: 10/24

Working Draft: 10/29

Polished Draft: 11/17

For your Discovery Draft focus on close analysis of a chosen poem, identifying an idea about the poem and showing how that idea is related to and developed in the poem.

Submission

Bring a printed copy of your draft to class. This copy will be used in peer review. Additionally, submit a digital copy for my feedback in one of two ways:

1. Share the Google document of your essay with tschenold@cornish.edu, enabling comments so I can leave targeted feedback.
2. Email an RTF file as an attachment to tschenold@cornish.edu. Your word processing software will have an ability to "Save As..." to an RTF file. This will ensure that I can handle the file. Please also make sure you name the file "LastnameFirstinitial_NE.rft" (so, if I were submitting it would be "SchenoldT_NE.rft").