English 100

First Essay Assignment

Value:   10%

Length: 500 word minimum; 1,000 word maximum

In MLA format, write an essay about either Samuel TaylorColeridge’s “Kubla Khan, Margaret Atwood's "Siren Song" or Atwood's "Variations on the word love" based on one of the following writing prompts. Remember to include a topic sentence and thesis statement near the beginning of your essay and provide ample support for your assertions. Also be sure to properly reference your quotations and sources, and to include a “Works Cited” page at the end of your essay.

Some topics you may wish to consider are:

1) In many ways, "Kubla Khan" serves as social criticism. What parts of society do you think Coleridge is specifically criticizing? What was 19th Century England like at that time? What do you think were the social norms and conventions that the speaker in the poem is trying to subvert?

2) "Variations of the word love" addresses the overuse and therefore dilution of the word "love." The poem was originally published in 1974. Think about how the proliferation of the Internet and social media has affected our use of language such as words like "love" Do you "love" your new phone? Do you "love" caramel macchiatos? Do you "love" your children, parents, spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend? What does it mean to "love" an object as opposed to a person? **Is Atwood correct in her assessment? If so, what recourse do we have?**

3) Atwood's "Siren Song" is ironic on numerous levels. What are these ironies? What is their point? Clearly the poem has a feminist tone to it, so how do the ironies present in the text serve to accentuate or articulate the point the poem attempts to make about preconceptions or prejudices?

--For this assignment you should quote from the poem at least once, and the quotation must conform to MLA standards: the quotation should be properly introduced and grammatically correct with proper documentation in a “Works Cited” page at the end of the essay. If you choose to use secondary material, it must be quoted properly with proper documentation. **Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, a very serious offence. Copying sources from the internet and not citing them is plagiarism; paraphrasing without acknowledging the source is plagiarism**