Symbolism & Allegory

**Paper details:**

Type: Written Paper Style: Modern Language Association Format Length: 1,000 words or more Description: Write a literary analysis of one of the readings we have engaged with thus far that utilizes one of the schools of literary criticism. Be Sure to: Include works cited page. Suggested Genre: Poetry Second Critical Response Essay As we saw with the first paper, this assignment is really great practice for the upcoming research paper. The assignment asks for a literary analysis that utilizes one of the many schools of literary criticism. The second half of the class includes both poetry and drama. What is a “Critical Response Essay?" Critical Response Essays are intended to demonstrate the student's understanding of the assigned literary works and give the student the opportunity to reflect on his or her academic considerations of that work or author. To do this the student should use one of the schools of literary criticism that are studied in this class as a starting place. This seems complex and daunting at first, but it can be quite simple. To begin, a student should choose one of the readings that have been assigned and combine this with one of the schools of literary criticism we will consider to come up with an argumentative topic and thesis for his or her paper. Be certain to choose a reading that you find interesting and have given a considerable amount of thought to. What should my topic be? Your topic should be something of your own choosing that reflects our readings. Again, the critical response is your opportunity to consider an aspect of a work you find interesting and compose a paper exploring the aspects of the work that intrigue you by using literary criticism as your guide. In the past, good papers have considered the psychological facets of characters, explored symbolism in the work, thought about the role of gender or class in the work, and a great many other topics. The simplest method for determining a topic is something like a math equation. You can answer the question, "what did I read that was interesting? Why was this interesting?" When you have an idea of this answer it will lead you to the topic and school of literary criticism. Again, as an example, let us assume a reader found the play Hamlet most interesting among the course readings. Perhaps he or she found it interesting because Hamlet seems to mentally ill. The topic and thesis might arrive by the use of the formula mentioned above (work of interest school of literary criticism = topic). Some example topics that work well for this course might include: Elements of Poetry (remember to choose something specific under these umbrella topics): Form & Structure Symbolism & Allegory Voice: speaker vs. author, tone Sound devices Theme Using "To His Coy Mistress" by Andrew Marvell and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T.S. Eliot, construct a comparison and contrast argumentative essay in which you examine how each author uses one of the following themes: Time Carpe diem ("Seize the day") Love vs. Lust Life and death Write an analytical comparison and contrast essay on one of the following pairs of poems. Note: you need to create an argument that contains a framework for comparing them. You can do so by theme, a literary device, motif, etc. Other ideas to consider when choosing a topic: What about the genders of the characters that affect your reading? (Gender Study) Do any of the events of the author's life seem relevant to the work? (Biographic Criticism) Do the characters seem to display behaviors that modern psychologists would find interesting? (Psychoanalytic Criticism) Are any of the items in the text symbolic? (Semiotics) How does class or level of wealth affect what the narrator or characters are acting on? (Marxist Criticism) How do you think this particular reading assignment fits into its period of time? (Historical Literary Criticism) How does the race of the characters or author come into the narrative? (African American Literary Criticism, Ethnic Criticism) In what significant ways can we expect readers to react to this work? (Reader Response) Remember that it all rests on an argument and your argument requires a thesis statement The thesis sentence is, by far, the most important sentence in the paper. The goal of this sentence is to outline for the reader what the argument of the paper will be. It most often is found as the last sentence of the first paragraph and holds such an important place in your paper that you should expect that a poor thesis statement will lead to a poor grade. The thesis statement is a foundation for the argument and should attempt to succinctly and clearly let the reader know what the paper is going to be about. A good rule of thumb when writing either a critical response paper or a research paper is to make sure that every sentence in the paper is in some way continuing to prove the argument first established by the thesis. What format and length should the essay be? Additional Tips Present a clear thesis statement in your Introduction that establishes your focus—it should be a claim that your essay will prove. Aim to select a thesis that is not utterly obvious; you may want to conceive of your thesis as a declarative statement that a sophisticated reader could find disagreeable. Titles of short stories and poems in quotation marks; titles of novels and longer works should be underlined or italicized. Discuss literature in the historical present tense—not the past tense. Here are some examples: Twain portrays the Mississippi river and reveals the hypocrisy of Southern Christianity. Or, Jim teaches Huck a valuable lesson about friendship. When quoting, please include the page number from our anthology in parentheses. Note that the parentheses go before the period or comma. Here’s an example: According to the narrator, “There are things in that wallpaper that nobody knows about but me, nor ever will” (436). You should use block quotations for any poetry that runs more than three lines of prose that runs more than four lines. If you quote less than 3 lines from a poem, be sure to use a forward slash (/) to indicate line breaks. Be sure to proofread your paper to catch obvious surface errors. GRADING: The responses will be graded. Consequently, aim to develop your ideas clearly and fully—don’t hesitate to take the space/time to explain your reaction, interpretation, and/or ideas. Also, make sure there is a basic essay organization (i.e. Introduction/ Body Paragraphs/ Conclusion) and proofread your paper to remove grammatical errors or typos. The response should not be a summary of the reading. (If it is, it will receive a grade no higher than a “C-”.) It also should not be a regurgitation of class discussion (If it is, it will receive a grade no higher than a “C-“.) Finally, you should not consult any outside sources to develop your response (i.e. the Web). The only way you can fail a reading response is if you fail to write it, if you fail to submit it, or if you plagiarize it (see above Policy on Academic Honesty). In short, you have wasted an opportunity to think for yourself.