

Essay 2 Assignment Sheet: Reader Response

Donath -- English 102

In your first assignment you practiced reading the text closely—and analyzing the patterns inherent therein; now you will bring your own experience to bear in your analysis of the text. Reader Response Criticism acknowledges the insights that we bring to the text and the contributions we make during the process of interpretation. Consider your initial personal/subjective response to the text a first step toward a receptive response, and, ultimately, toward a comprehensive analysis.

Assignment:

Write a four-to-five page (10-12) on one of the works listed below. As always, first read the work closely. Then, make a claim about some aspect(s) of the work that you found significant. Again, while there is no single "correct" reading of a text, in this theory, readings are constrained by the text itself and by the consensus of readers; you will need to support your arguments. (Do not refer to outside sources, however). Since you will need to quote from the work in order to present evidence, follow the MLA guidelines for citation and Works Cited format. Choose one of the following:

- “Samuel” by Grace Paley (*Lit.* p219-221)
- “If You Touched My Heart” by Isabel Allende (*Lit.* p250-256)
- “In the Gloaming” by Alice Elliott Dark (*Lit.* p256-268)
- “Sonny's Blues” by James Baldwin (*Lit.* p1151-1173)
- “Reading Amelia” by Lee Bauknight (*WAC* 50-56)

Important Dates:

- **F 2/7: For homework, read the works and write a response to ONE of these in your journal.**
- **M 2/10: In class write the first draft of the essay in your journal; take your initial response and turn it into a critical paper. Provide a clear claim, along with reasons and supporting evidence.**
- **W 2/12: Typed copy of Essay 2.1 due at the beginning of class.**
- **W 2/21: Essay 2.2 due (highlight or underline changes/additions; staple original draft on back).**

- Always READ CLOSELY: 1) Read multiple times; have a conversation with the text in the margins. 2) Note your responses to the text during the reading process—how do your expectations change? 3) Ask questions; suggest possible answers. 4) Focus on the aspect of the text that is most significant to you and begin to construct your argument.
- Remember that Reader Response Criticism is about process. Be sure to move from
Emotional --> Reflective
Personal --> Social
Response --> Criticism
- Refer to pp 219-231 in your anthology for guidelines on writing about fiction. Also, refer to the drafts provided in your textbook(s) and in WAC as models for your own essay.
- Don't use any outside material to write this essay. In this theory the readers own insights are the key to finding meaning in the text.