Writing Exercise 1: "Notecard" Essay | Due: September 11

Goal:
The goal of this assignment is to practice developing and writing a supported, persuasive, and nuanced interpretation of a literary text.

Assignment:
Your assignment is to select a passage from one of the texts we've read (prior to the due date of the paper) and perform a "close reading" of that passage. You will write a "notecard" essay making an argument regarding what the author is trying to achieve (poetically, philosophically, dramatically, etc.) with that passage through your close reading and present supporting evidence from the text.

For this exercise you will compose an "essay" that would fit on an 3x5 index card, including an original thesis statement that makes an argument regarding the passage's significance/meaning and provide supporting evidence (quotations) from the text.

The final product should do the following, in **one 3x5 index card** (front and back—use template provided on Canvas—minimum 10pt Times New Roman Font, single spaced)**:**

- Articulate a clear and compelling thesis that argues the meaning/significance of your selected passage;
- Support your claim by presenting 2-3 pieces of evidence from the text, through quotation;
- Provide a sentence or two for each piece of evidence that analyzes that evidence and explains how it supports your claim;
- Properly and accurately cite the text within the essay <u>and</u> a works cited entry using MLA style.

Invention and Inquiry:
In preparing this assignment, select a short passage of about 10-20 lines (if you are choosing a shorter poem, you may work with the entire text). Perform a close reading on these lines—read the passage and carefully annotate it. Analyze the passage's technical and narrative elements—such as diction, sentence patterns, tone, figurative language, structure, plot, character, setting, etc. What observations about the passage and its meaning/significance do you have?

You may wish to consider questions such as: How do these elements impact the meaning/significance of the passage/text? How does the scene or passage illuminate a crucial element of the work as a whole? What in the passage adds light to our understanding of the themes developed in the text? What does the passage tell us about identity, power, class, race, gender, etc.? Is the passage especially indicative of the values of the era/location in which it was written?

When you have a firm grasp of the specific elements of the passage, develop a (hypo)thesis about the effects/implications/significance of the elements in this passage on the meaning of the text. Then find approximately four pieces of evidence in the text that led you to this claim. Put these together in an order that seems to make sense. Draft a few sentences for each piece of evidence that anaylzes the evidence and explains how/why that evidence supports your thesis statement.

Once you have a sense of your evidence and arguments, revise your draft in which you develop your thesis fully, select your strongest pieces of evidence, organize your evidence logically, and clearly analyze the textual evidence and explain to your reader how that evidence supports your thesis statement.

In creating an argumentative essay with an "arguable" thesis (i.e., someone could have a different interpretation), it is important to know the difference between observation and argument. Move beyond observations and description/summary toward a unique, interesting assertion about meaning. Make your keen observations, then explain to your readers why those observations are meaningful. What evidence from the text supports your interpretation?

Audience and Tone:
This is an (abbreviated) academic paper so it should be written using professional and authoritative language to present your findings. Your tone should be formal and informative. Your audience is your academic peers.

Specifications for Satisfactory:
To be considered Satisfactory, the exercise must do the following:

- Be submitted on Canvas by the due date specified
- Meet formatting requirements equivalent to one 3x5 index card (front and back) with minimum 10pt Times New Roman Font, single spaced, 0.2" margins
- Include a clear and compelling thesis that argues the meaning/significance of your selected passage
- Present at least 2 relevant pieces of evidence from the text, through quotation
- Provide a brief statement for each piece of evidence that analyzes that evidence and explains how/why it supports the thesis
- Demonstrate a clear and logical progression of ideas
- Accurately cite each quotation using parenthetical notation within the "essay"
- Include a full citation of the text at the end using MLA style
- Be written in a clear manner with appropriate academic tone with few or no mechanical issues

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If you have any questions or concerns about this assignment, I encourage you to e-mail me or come see me during my office hours. Also consider visiting the Miller Writing Center for help.